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CYBERTHEFT ADDS TO US-CHINA TENSIONS AHEAD OF UPCOMING TALKS

Tensions between the U.S. and China are growing over its island-building in the South China Sea and over suspicions that Beijing was behind a massive hack into a federal government server that resulted in the theft of personnel and security clearance records of 14 million employees and contractors.

But both powers have incentives to calm the waters ahead of the Chinese leader's visit to Washington in the fall.

The two countries' top diplomats and finance officials meet here next week for the annual U.S.-China strategic and economic dialogue. The Obama administration says the two governments won't be papering over their differences, but they are expected to accentuate the positive, stressing areas of cooperation, like climate change.

Civilian and military officials will meet Monday to discuss thorny security issues. Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew kick off two days of talks Tuesday with Vice Premier Wang Yang and State Councilor Yang

Jiechi on a sprawling agenda, including plans for a bilateral investment treaty.

China, in particular, is presenting the dialogue as a prelude to Xi Jinping's visit to the White House slated for September, his first since becoming China's president in 2013.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang called it an opportunity to push for new progress in the building of a new model of major power relationship, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported Friday.

But it's a model with cracks in it. Relations between the world's two largest economies, with their divergent political systems and priorities, rarely run smoothly. But recent months have been particularly rocky.

China's reclamation of more than 2,000 acres of land on disputed islands and atolls in the South China Sea since last year has raised international alarm over its territorial ambitions. Washington took the unusual step last month of publicizing a U.S. military surveillance flight that showed the massive scale of China's island-building.

China says the islands are its sovereignty territory, but Washington argues that the continuation of building work and militarization of the islands could enflame complex territorial disputes with China's neighbors, with whom the U.S. is seeking to forge closer ties while preserving freedom of navigation in sea lanes crucial for world trade.

Nobody is interested in conflict here and there's no reason why it needs to devolve into conflict. Again, that's why next week's meeting is so important, State Department spokesman John Kirby told reporters Thursday.

Cybersecurity is another source of acrimony that's up for discussion, given fresh urgency by the massive security breach that led to the theft of personal information of as many









Image: Sean Gallup

as 14 million current and former U.S. federal employees. The Obama administration believes that China's government, not criminal hackers, was responsible for the breach that included detailed background information on military and intelligence personnel.

China has denied involvement in the break-in and says it is also a victim of cyberattacks.

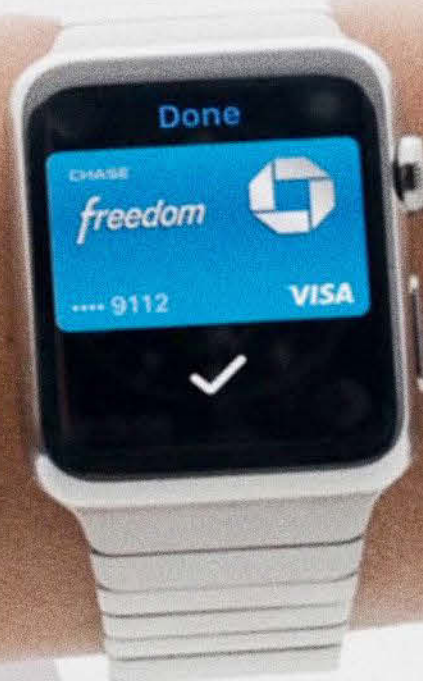
The U.S. business community, meanwhile, is concerned that regulatory barriers in China are growing, not easing, despite Xi's promise to advance economic reforms. Progress has been slow on the bilateral investment treaty the U.S. and China agreed to pursue two years ago, and China has reportedly submitted a long list of sectors it wants excluded.

Daniel Russel, top U.S. diplomat for East Asia, said that the U.S. and China wouldn't ignore their differences, including on human rights issues. Since taking power two years ago, Xi has consolidated China's authoritarian system, squelching dissent and civil society.

We don't always see eye to eye but the fact is global challenges require that we cooperate, Russel told reporters Thursday, citing recent cooperation on fighting the Ebola virus in Africa, the transition in Afghanistan and diplomacy by world powers to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

As the push for a global climate change deal intensifies ahead of a December summit of world leaders in Paris, President Barack Obama needs China's support. Obama and Xi committed to curbing emissions when they met in Beijing in November, which environmentalists hailed as a sign that reluctant nations like China were finally getting on board.

Climate change will be a hot topic at next week's dialogue in Washington, China's Xinhua agency said in Friday's report. The South China Sea and cybersecurity didn't get a mention.



NEED REASON TO PAY BY PHONE APPLE, GOOGLE ADD NEW FEATURES



The tech industry has been saying for years that smartphones would make traditional wallets obsolete. But most people still use cash or plastic when they shop in stores.

That could change later this year when three leading tech companies are promising to give shoppers more reasons to use digital wallets.

Apple said last week that it's adding store-issued credit cards and store rewards programs to Apple Pay, the mobile payments service it launched last fall. Google is readying a similar service for millions more smartphones to run on its Android software. And Samsung promises a service for its newest Galaxy smartphones will be accepted in more stores than both Apple Pay and Google's Android Pay.

Our ultimate goal is to replace the wallet, Apple vice president Jennifer Bailey told software developers last week.

The new options come as numbers show mobile payments are still in their infancy. About 16 million U.S. shoppers used smartphones to pay for \$3.5 billion in

store purchases last year, according to the eMarketer research firm. That includes payments with Apple Pay, other services like PayPal and apps from merchants like Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts.

While that's a tiny slice of the \$4.3 trillion spent in stores overall last year, eMarketer expects mobile payments will grow to \$27.5 billion in 2016.

We're still in this very early stage of laying the groundwork to be able to make this happen, said analyst Brian Yeager at eMarketer. But there's progress being made.

The progress follows years in which the industry has struggled to get digital wallets off the ground as major players failed to agree on technical standards, security measures and financial terms. Some big merchants have balked at services developed by Apple or Google, saying they'd rather build and control their own system.

Still, Apple opened the door for widespread adoption of digital wallets last year when it launched Apple Pay with endorsements from major banks and retail chains. With Apple Pay, which only works on the latest models of iPhones and the Apple Watch, users link a credit card or bank account to their iPhone.

Once that's done, a user only has to hold the phone next to a device at a store counter. The phone and the store device communicate wirelessly, prompting the user to authorize payment by pressing the phone's fingerprint sensor instead of swiping a plastic card. Apple Pay uses encrypted codes to protect shoppers' financial information.

Apple says shoppers and merchants have embraced Apple Pay, although it hasn't released usage details.

One early fan is Allison Lucas, a 35-year-old tech worker who tapped her Apple Watch to









pay for a box of breakfast cereal and other items at a Walgreens store in San Francisco's Financial District last week.

You don't realize how much freedom it gives you until you try it, said Lucas, who used her watch to pay for lunch on another day when she accidentally left her wallet at home.

But not everyone is convinced they need Apple Pay.

I might come around and try it at some point, but I haven't really seen a reason, said Amalia Bornstein, a 29-year-old data analyst. Though she carried her iPhone 6 in hand as she walked along a busy San Francisco sidewalk, Bornstein said she still uses cash or plastic for most purchases.

Apple says it's offering more reasons this fall with its next software update, which will let shoppers charge store credit accounts and redeem loyalty points from major chains. Forrester Research analyst Sucharita Mulpuru said frequent shoppers see loyalty rewards as an important benefit, and they want an easy way to use them.

Walgreens expects more customers will pay with smartphones or watches when 80 million members of the chain's Balance Rewards program will be able to use their loyalty points with Apple Pay, said Ben Weiss, Walgreens mobile products manager. J.C. Penney also is betting iPhone users will want to use their store-label credit cards. Spokeswoman Daphne Avila said the store's own credit card is used on more J.C. Penney transactions than any other payment card, because customers earn points for every transaction.

Google, which had struggled to win support for its earlier Google Wallet service, says major banks and retail chains have signed on to its new Android Pay. The service will work similarly to Apple Pay when released later this year.





Google says it will incorporate store rewards, but won't work with store credit cards to start. Android Pay will work on a variety of phones running the two latest versions of Android software - or about half of all Android phones in use.

Samsung, meanwhile, says it's addressing another hurdle with a service called Samsung Pay, due for release this fall. Unlike rival services Apple Pay and Android Pay, Samsung says its technology will work with traditional store credit-card readers.

Apple Pay and Android Pay only work in stores with equipment capable of receiving data from smartphones via near-field communication or NFC radio. But new models of Samsung's Galaxy smartphones will transmit two kinds of signals - one for NFC readers and one that works with older equipment that merchants use to read the magnetic stripe on credit cards.

Many smaller stores don't have NFC readers. But Visa and MasterCard are pushing retailers to meet an October deadline for installing new terminals that read cards with embedded microchips, which are more secure than magnetic stripes. While the technologies are separate, many chip-card readers will accept NFC signals too.

Some experts are hopeful the changes will draw more shoppers to use digital wallets. But there remain some big challenges. For instance, Wal-Mart has declined to accept Apple Pay and is part of a consortium working on its own mobile payment system.

It's a chicken-and-egg problem, said Yeager, explaining that shoppers won't embrace a service if stores won't accept it, while many stores want to know consumers and banks are backing a system before they invest in new check-out terminals.



BATKID SET FOR U.S. THEATRICAL RELEASE

NOT JUST ANOTHER
SUPERHERO MOVIE

WISHES DO COME TRUE #SFBATKID



THE STORY THAT TOUCHED HEARTS ACROSS AMERICA

We all love a superhero movie, right? Well in that case, you might want to consider one for a slightly different kind of superhero. Released by Warner Bros on June 26 following its debut at January's Slamdance Film Festival, *Batkid Begins* centers on the touching story of Miles Scott, the child and cancer survivor **whose wish to be Batman's sidekick was dramatically and touchingly realized with the help of many thousands of social media followers.**

It all began with a request by Scott to the San Francisco branch of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the non-profit organization that arranges experiences, or "wishes", for children with life-threatening medical conditions. In the case of northern California native Miles, who had been diagnosed with lymphoblastic leukemia at just 18 months old, his wish was to celebrate the completion of his chemotherapy treatments by becoming 'Batkid'.

HOW BATKID BECAME REALITY

To put the plan into action, Make-A-Wish duly got in touch with the San Francisco Bay Area chapter, which with the help of a marketing agency, sent out an email a month before the event requesting supporters. The initial hope was for a mere few hundred people to be present at the closing ceremony, but by the night before the event, some 12,000 volunteers had come forward.





Gotham City Chronicle

Friday, November 15, 2013 | PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER | 8LX0 | *****

BATKID



On 'Batkid day' itself, more than 10,000 people showed up at various venues to cheer on Miles as Batkid and his younger brother, who was dressed as Robin, as they got involved in a series of staged crime scenarios in parts of the city with the help of 'Batman' himself.

For one day only, San Francisco was actually Gotham City - the San Francisco Chronicle even marking the occasion by publishing a special edition of the paper as the Gotham City Chronicle, complete with the headline "Batkid Saves City: Hooded hero nabs Riddler, rescues damsel in distress." Combined with the immense interest on social media and even the Make-a-Wish Foundation's website crashing due to the onslaught of visitors, it's fair to say that the event was quite the phenomenon.



Image: Ramin Talaie







NOW, MILES IS A MOVIE STAR

As if all of that dream-fulfilling in one day wasn't enough for Miles, fast-forward to this month, and a now in-remission Miles can look forward to seeing himself on the silver screen. Yes, that's right - a documentary film has been produced, written by Kurt Kuenne and Dana Nachman, the latter taking on directorial duties. It tells the story of how the big day was organized and unfolded, and let's just say that it greatly touched many a usually-hardened critic.

Among those critics was Christopher Campbell, who wrote for Nonfics that the movie was **"obviously adorable and heartwarming from start to finish"**. He drew particular attention to the involvement of Kuenne, whose best-known film *Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father* was "famous for being possibly the most gut-wrenching documentary of all time. He made a lot of people weep with devastation with that one, and now he's got a new doc that will have you crying happy tears instead."

A WARM-HEARTED DOCUMENTARY

It's clear from the reviews that *Batkid* is a film that knows precisely what it wants to be: it's there to enchant and enthuse people with an infectious sentimentality and positivity, not get into the grittier aspects of the story that many people might prefer to avoid.

This is not to suggest that the documentary didn't cover a lot of ground. After all, it actually takes the story back to the very beginning, with Miles' medical condition and





application to Make-A-Wish, followed by all of the preparatory work for the big day and the astonishing rise, rise and rise again of support from around the world, largely facilitated by social media.

We also get to completely follow the event itself, as Batman (former LucasArts video game developer Eric Johnston), Batkid and Robin pursue the Penguin and the Riddler (local actor Philip Watt) and even save a damsel in distress (Sue Graham Johnston), who was tied up on the train tracks of San Francisco's historic cable cars in the Russian Hill area of the city. At one point, the Penguin - played by Mike Jutan - even 'kidnaps' the San Francisco Giants' mascot Lou Seal.

With Gotham City saved, Batkid turned up at SF City Hall to a hero's welcome, being presented with a key to the city by San Francisco mayor Ed Lee and even receiving a video tweet from President Barack Obama at the White House. The film captures the sense of overwhelming occasion and emotion, commentary being provided by such people involved in the elaborate undertaking as Scott's parents, leaders at the Bay Area Make-A-Wish and the actors who portrayed the various characters.

BUT NOT A 'WARTS AND ALL'

However, as undoubtedly life-affirming and inspirational as the documentary is, it would be wrong to pretend that there was zero criticism of the 'Batkid' phenomenon, with some feeling that important questions were left unanswered by the documentary film

as well as the event itself. San Francisco city supervisor Eric Mar was perhaps the most notorious detractor, wondering aloud on Twitter "**how many 1000s of SF kids living off SNAP/FoodStamps could have been fed from the \$\$**" - comments that earned him a rebuke from Townhall.com as "Jerk of the Week".

The accusation from Townhall.com writer Christine Rousselle was that instead of learning "the heartwarming lesson behind the day", **Mar had "decided to politicize the event."** Mar, to his credit, responded to the uproarious response to his comments with **dignity**, praising Miles as "a lovable and brave little boy" and the Make-A-Wish Foundation "for the incredible and inspiring work they do bringing joy to the lives of so many other brave children."

But he continued: "The words that I tweeted today regarding this event are not meant to diminish how special today was. I simply wanted to urge that we, as a City, find similar amounts of love, compassion and empathy for children living every day in dire circumstances who, in the vast majority of cases, will not be supported or even recognized by our society."

To be fair to Mar, he was probably only highlighting the very real unease that some people do have with hugely-publicized and sentimentalized events like 'Batkid day'. There is a lingering suspicion among some that, as heartwarming as it all unquestionably is, it might all be some kind of attempt to compensate for our societal guilt that we don't do more to help a wider range of ill, hungry and disadvantaged children to

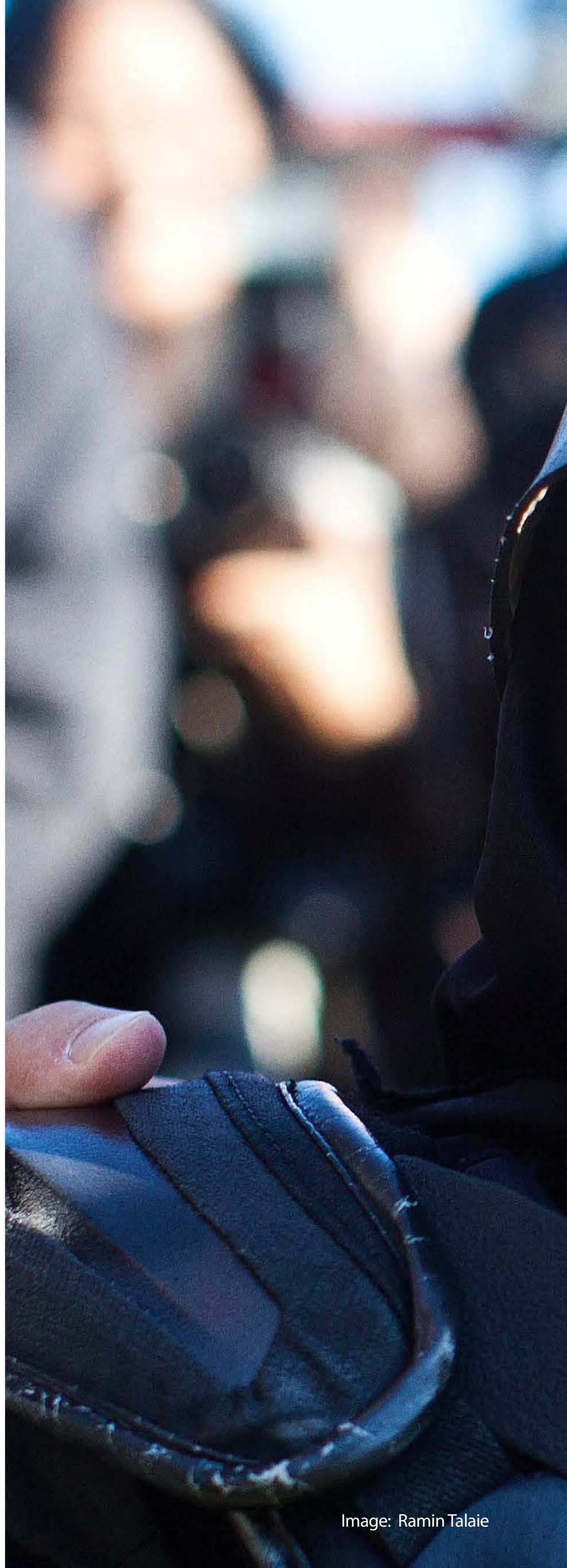


Image: Ramin Talaie











overcome their obstacles in growing up and enjoy fulfilling lives.

Unsurprisingly, the film does not mention Mar's controversial comments, and although it is mentioned that there were some complainants about taxpayer money being used for the event, this is answered with the disclosure that a generous couple had agreed to foot the entire bill. Clearly, the filmmakers couldn't bring themselves to include anything that couldn't be counteracted with an upbeat response.

A MUST-SEE FOR POSITIVITY-SEEKERS

Nonetheless, this is a movie that doesn't pretend to be anything that it is not. The intention of Nachman, Kuenne and co was never to make *Batman Begins* a hard-hitting examination of precisely why 'Batkid' became such a viral colossus. The film never asks, for example, whether all 10,000-20,000 people who turned up to see Batman, Batkid and Robin traverse San Francisco as 'Gotham City' really did so simply out of support for a cancer-surviving little boy, or instead to be involved in a massive viral event.

That lack of scrutiny is not necessarily a big problem if you're not expecting a film that ducks 'beneath the surface'. In its own right, the Batkid phenomenon is a very interesting and inspiring one indeed, and if you are looking to be uplifted at the theaters this summer, you really couldn't hope to choose a better film. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan

HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN SOON PAY WITH YOUR PHONE

Big tech companies are competing to help you pay for a store purchase with your phone. Here are some options:

APPLE PAY:

How it works: Apple Pay lets you pay by placing an iPhone 6 or 6 Plus, or Apple Watch, next to a store device equipped for near-field communication (NFC) signals. You authorize the transaction with your fingerprint. For security, Apple Pay uses a “tokenization” method that replaces your credit or bank account number with an encrypted code and generates a second code for each transaction. The service works with most bank cards; it’s adding Discover and store cards this fall.

Where it works: Apple says it will be accepted at 1 million locations by next month. Most are chains, although some independent stores have NFC readers as well. A few chains like Wal-Mart are resisting Apple Pay while an industry group works on an alternative. Apple Pay also works with many online sites and apps.









ANDROID PAY:

How it works: Google struggled to win traction for its old app, Wallet, but it's struck deals with major banks, retail chains and wireless carriers to support a new service called Android Pay. It will use "tokenization" and work much like Apple Pay. Android Pay will be available for any smartphone with an NFC chip and Android software known as KitKat, Lollipop or the upcoming M. For older phones without fingerprint readers, it will require a PIN to authorize transactions.

Where it works: Google says the new Android Pay will be accepted at 700,000 retail locations to start, including many of the same chains that accept Apple Pay, and even some vending machines with NFC readers. It will work with major payment cards, including Discover, merchant rewards programs, online sites and apps - but not store credit cards initially.

SAMSUNG PAY:

How it works: Samsung plans its own payment service for new Galaxy S6 smartphones later this year. Like Apple Pay and Android Pay, the Samsung service will use the phone's fingerprint reader and transmit digital "tokens" instead of account numbers, for security.

Where it works: Samsung Pay promises to work at millions of stores, regardless of whether they have an NFC terminal. New Samsung phones will have an NFC chip and a separate technology that communicates with older store devices that read the magnetic stripe on a standard credit or debit card.

PAYPAL:

How it works: PayPal is working on a variety of mobile payment technologies. Its smartphone app shows a list of participating stores near you. Once there, you swipe your screen to “check in” after making a purchase or ordering food. In some cases, the app sends a wireless notification to the store, where a clerk completes the transaction and charges your PayPal account. Other stores may require you to type a PIN into their check-out device, or show a bar code that appears on your phone screen.

Where it works: PayPal is accepted by a number of online sites and independent retail stores, but only a few major chains such as Home Depot, Foot Locker, Autozone and Toys R Us.










APPLE'S ABOUT-FACE REVEALS CRACKS IN MUSIC INDUSTRY

Apple's abrupt about-face on paying royalties for songs during a three-month free-trial period for its new music service was a symbolic victory for superstar Taylor Swift and other artists, and a shrewd business move by Apple, at a time when the streaming phenomenon is causing major changes in the music industry.

The olive branch extended by Apple comes as music is increasingly being consumed on streaming services like Spotify and Deezer - to the detriment of album sales and iTunes downloads - heightening tensions between artists, labels and service providers over who gets paid and how much.





Apple had already agreed to share revenue from the new Apple Music service once users start paying a \$10-a-month subscription fee for the service, which it plans to launch June 30. But the technology giant wasn't planning to pay artists and labels directly for the use of their music during the free, 90-day trial period that it's offering to get fans to try the service.


That changed quickly Sunday, after Swift posted an open letter to Apple opposing the lack of royalties during the free period, and declaring she'd be withholding her latest album 1989 from Apple Music because of it. Apple Senior Vice President Eddy Cue reversed the company's trial-period terms, which had gone out to thousands of independent labels, including Swift's Big Machine Label Group, after the technology giant reached a deal with major label groups Universal, Sony and Warner in early June.

The company needed to avoid a PR nightmare and quickly extinguish the firestorm that Swift had created, said Daniel Ives, tech stocks analyst with FBR Capital Markets.

They needed to handle this perfectly, Ives said, because Apple is facing an uphill battle against competing services like Spotify that are already well-established. There can be no snafus or speed bumps, from the artists' perspective, or any type of consumer backlash.

Apple hasn't publicly revealed how much it will pay in royalties for the free streaming period. Cue declined to offer financial details in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday, but he said the payments will be based on a different formula than the company had already negotiated for sharing subscription revenue, since Apple won't be collecting any revenue from the 90 days of free streaming. Instead, Cue said, royalties for the free streaming will be based on a standard amount for each time a song is streamed.





Jeff Price, the CEO and founder of royalty collection firm Audiam, said the free-period royalties could amount to about \$25 million per month in the U.S. alone if Apple Music pays the same as Spotify did in December 2014, according to publishers' data. Ives noted the cost to Apple is not even a rounding error for a company that made \$39.5 billion in profit and \$182.8 billion in revenue for its last fiscal year.

While Apple Music doesn't have any subscribers yet, compared to the 4.7 million Spotify had in the U.S. then, its global launch in 100 countries could quickly change that. Still, Price says the gesture will likely be worth it for Apple.

It got them an unlimited amount of public goodwill and artist goodwill, Price said.

Some artists did praise Apple Monday for its decision, while many more cheered Swift for taking her public stand. Rocker Elvis Costello called Swift our future president on Twitter and added, You tell `em, Girl.

Artist grumbling about the lack of compensation during Apple Music's lengthy free trial had been brewing since the unveiling of service at Apple's developer conference two weeks ago.

The American Association of Independent Music expected a flood of sign-ups at launch, suggesting to its members in an email they should reconsider releasing music to the platform right away We are struggling to understand why rights holders would authorize their content on the service before October 1.

The fact that independent labels drove this change highlights their growing power in the music industry - and Apple's practice of simply offering independent labels terms that had been negotiated with the majors, said Rob Enderle, principal analyst of the Enderle Group.

It certainly showcases to Apple that if they step on the labels, some of them can step back pretty hard, Enderle said.

Withholding their latest releases from services like Spotify had already become the norm among top artists who see more to gain from download sales in the initial release period, including Swift and Adele, who herself is set to release 25 sometime later this year. But few artists have the same clout, and because download sales are falling in favor of revenue from streaming services, few spoke out publicly either for or against the plan.

Cue wouldn't comment on whether Swift will now make her album 1989 available on Apple Music.

Ben Bajarin, a longtime Apple watcher and founder of research firm Creative Strategies, said he'd never seen Apple make such a quick reversal on a major business issue. But he said Apple had no reason not to change position after it was clear artists were upset. And it will likely even gain more favor among fans.

If there were people on the fence about trying the new service, there are tens of millions that will probably try it now, just to see what it's about, and that will help Apple achieve its goal faster, Bajarin said.





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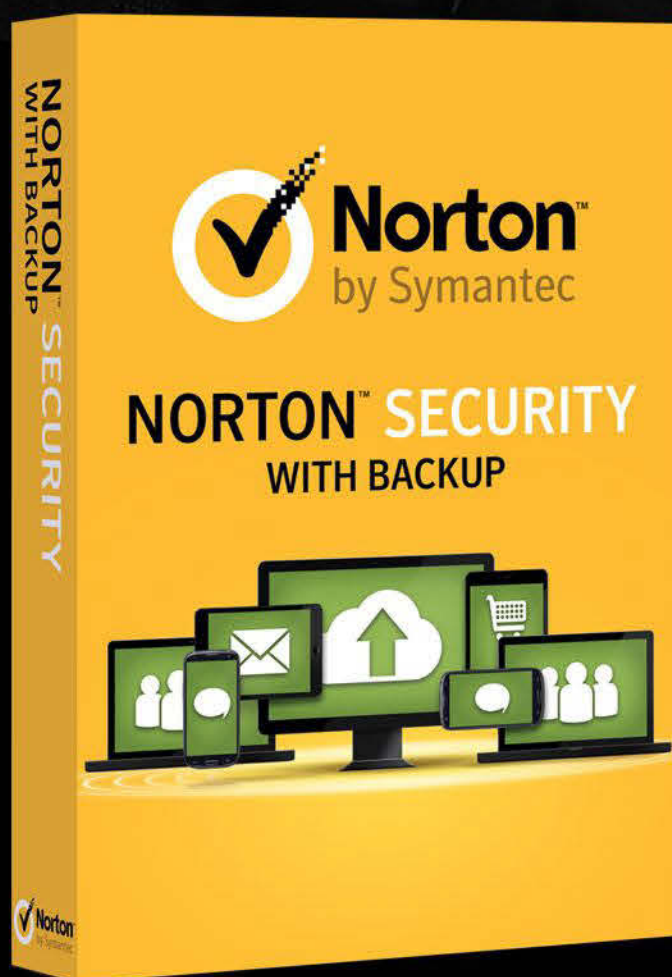
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STUNNING NEW GAME

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

STOKES THE HYPE



THE GAME THAT FANS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR

This November, another Star Wars video game is released - not massively surprising news, you might have thought, given the immense anticipation that already surrounds the upcoming reboot of the iconic film franchise, the J. J. Abrams-directed *The Force Awakens*. Indeed, with little information about the new game having been released so far, much of the fuss has centered on a pretty small number of previews and demos.

However, the fact that such scant information has already been enough to get people talking in feverish terms about the next Star Wars game might reveal quite a few things. It's telling, for sure, of the lack of truly memorable games based around the franchise to have been issued so far. But it also suggests that *Star Wars Battlefront* - which will be available for Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4 and the Xbox One - might be the game to buck that trend of relative mediocrity.



A LESS-THAN-DISTINGUISHED VIDEO GAME HISTORY

Let's have a quick run-through of some of the games that have been released as tie-ins to the Star Wars franchise down the years, as long ago as 1978. That was the year when an unlicensed game was released by Apple Computer on the cassette format for its Apple II. It enabled the player to assume the role of a "space pilot trainee", destroying TIE fighters via a first-person heads-up display.

Games to have followed since include 1982's *The Empire Strikes Back* for the Atari 2600, as well as the 1991 platform game *Star Wars* that was available for the Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Master System, Game Boy and Game Gear. Fast-forward to 2004, and the first *Star Wars: Battlefront* game saw the light of day, kick-starting a series of first- and third person shooter video games developed by such firms as Pandemic Studios, Free Radical Design and George Lucas' own LucasArts.



HOPES OF BUCKING THE TREND

For the latest Battlefront installment, it's EA Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment, commonly known as EA DICE or just DICE, that steps into the breach - ironic, **given its responsibility for the acclaimed Battlefield series of games that early Star Wars: Battlefront games were accused of being clones of.** There is admittedly a certain logic, though, to turning to the developer that might have somehow 'inspired it all'.

That's not the only sign of promise. The juicier processing power of the PlayStation 4, Xbox One and the latest PCs might just provide the first opportunity for a truly realistic Star Wars gaming experience for the first time - one in which fans can feel genuinely transported into the world of Skywalker, Leia, Vader and co.

More and more now, video games are considered to be as 'state of the art' as the motions and graphics of the silver screen, to such an extent that people are asking whether Stars Wars Battlefront might be ripe for the truly immersive experience that only the very latest generation of 3D glasses can provide.

It remains to be seen whether that will be the case, but the thorough work that DICE has already conducted into the original Star Wars props and locations suggests that it is striving to make the new game an instant classic. That became clear in a video that showed every inch of the graphical flair that you might expect, **as well as creative director Niklas Fegraeus' comment that "There's so much love and detail in these pieces that we want to get into the game."**









A POSITIVE EARLY RECEPTION

The initial videos that have been released have certainly given us hope of Star Wars Battlefront being something of a breakthrough title among the franchise's game tie-ins, with one such gameplay demo appearing at the recent Electronic Entertainment Expo, or E3.

The GamesRadar site perhaps summed up the general reaction better than we could, declaring it to be "dazzling" and "insane" before adding, **"It plays like someone just threw a first-person camera into a Star Wars movie battle."** It has all the exciting, flash-bang bombast you want, and all the chaotic, intimate, human focus Star Wars needs. It is, quite frankly, a relentless, giddy, air-punch generator".

There were similarly warm sentiments expressed by a recent GameCentral hands-on preview, which while admitting the game to be "already review-proof", added that it was actually "very good - and so far seems perfectly deserving of the hype and its inevitable sales."

That review also drew attention to key differences between this Battlefront and the preceding games in the series by other developers, pointing out that DICE didn't stick "particularly close to the original template" in its decision to omit space battles, a story campaign and even the Galactic Conquest mode that is a signature of the series.



The image is a full-page background for a game cover. It depicts a massive AT-AT walker in the center, towering over a battlefield. In the foreground, a Rebel soldier stands on a destroyed Imperial tank. The ground is covered in lava and smoke. Other AT-ATs and TIE fighters are visible in the background under a cloudy sky.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT™

EA



From a set-up and controls that were "purposefully uncomplicated" to graphics that were described as "drop dead gorgeous", there were many good things that GameCentral had to say about the upcoming game. The site even concluded that **"after playing the E3 demos we're almost as excited for the game as we are for the new film."**











THUMBS UP WERE NOT UNIVERSAL

However, in the interests of balance, it's probably a good idea to point out that not everyone who has had the chance to try the game out has necessarily had very positive things to say about it. **In one particular review, with the title DICE's Star Wars Battlefront feels like a half-assed Battlefield mod**, Jed Whitaker - writer for Destructoid - made unflattering comparisons with DICE's own long-lived franchise.

Whitaker said that the fears of some fans since EA's initial announcement that the game would turn out to be "Star Wars Battlefield" seemed to have come true. He said, for one thing, that "First person felt ripped from Battlefield, with aiming down sights or through scopes", adding that "I found myself dying far more often than I remember in classic Battlefront games, and that has been a problem for me in Battlefield games as well."

Even Whitaker, however, conceded that "the game was still enjoyable" and "looked and sounded like Star Wars". Another reviewer to try their hand at a Hoth multiplayer campaign at E3 was The Verge's Bryan Bishop, whose own early verdict more closely echoed the aforementioned widespread positivity. He said that despite being concerned on the evidence of the earlier-publicized gameplay trailer that "the game was going to be extraordinarily busy", he "needn't have worried."

Bishop continued: "Battlefront is simple and streamlined, allowing anyone that has

ever played a first-person shooter to jump right in with next to no learning curve." Of the incorporation of the original trilogy's weapons, models and props, he said that "the final result in the game is staggering. This didn't feel like I was watching a bad video game riff on the Hoth battle; this felt like I was truly inside a scene from The Empire Strikes Back that had somehow hit the cutting room floor.

"And let's get real: **while I may be wondering about the long-term shelf life of the game, I've already placed my pre-order. It's Star Wars.**"





A STAR WARS VIDEO GAME THAT COULD YET TRIUMPH

It's a fair bet that Star Wars Battlefront will sell in the truckloads in much the same way as admission tickets for The Force Awakens will - the anticipation has already been too much for any other result to be conceivable. The debate will continue, however, as to whether the game will do justice to the legendary status of the Star Wars franchise, in the way that almost every previous title has failed to do.

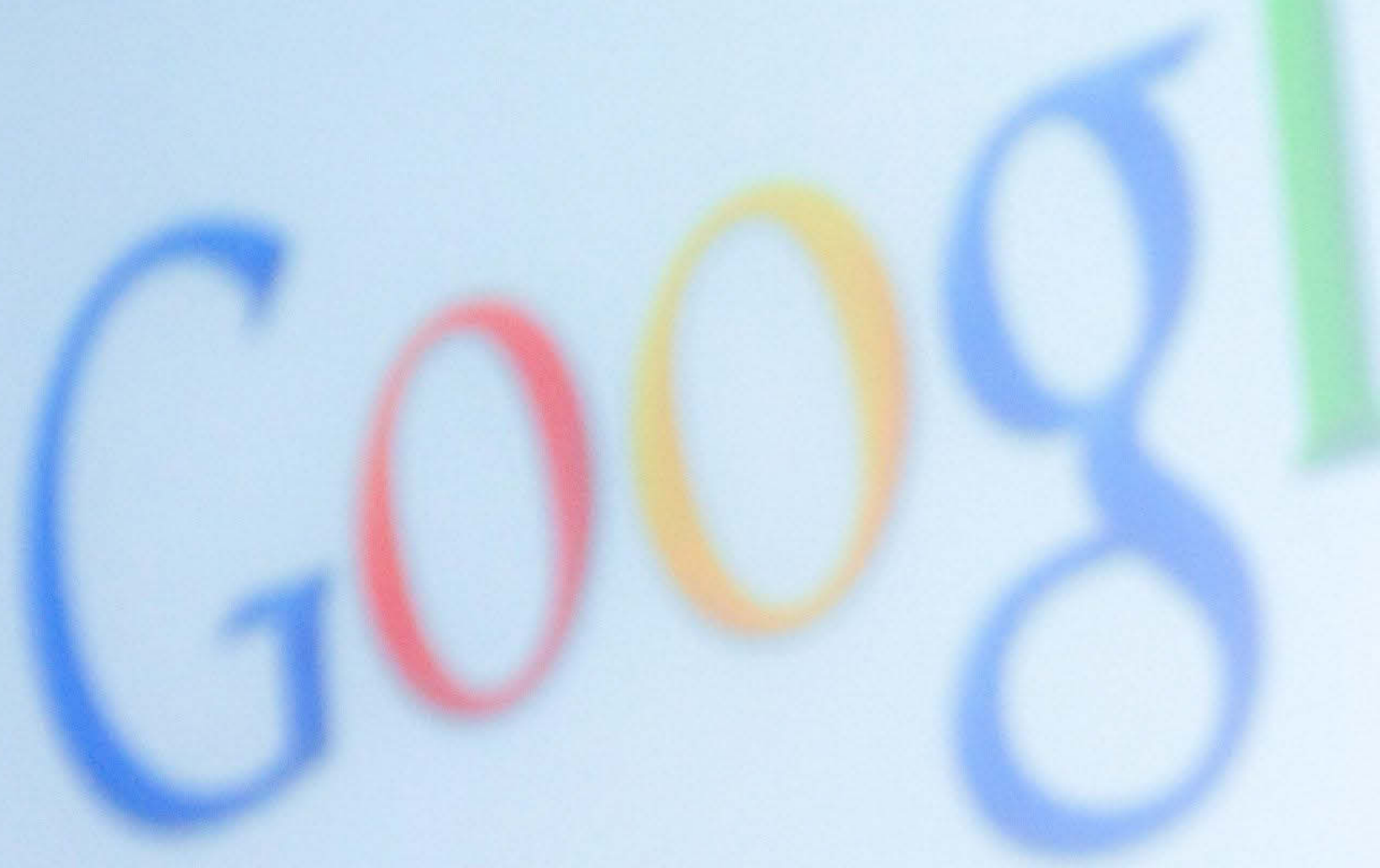
But with the early signs being such encouraging ones, we suspect that the force will, indeed, be strong with this one. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan





GOOGLE ADDS FREE AD-SUPPORTED TIER TO MUSIC APP IN THE US

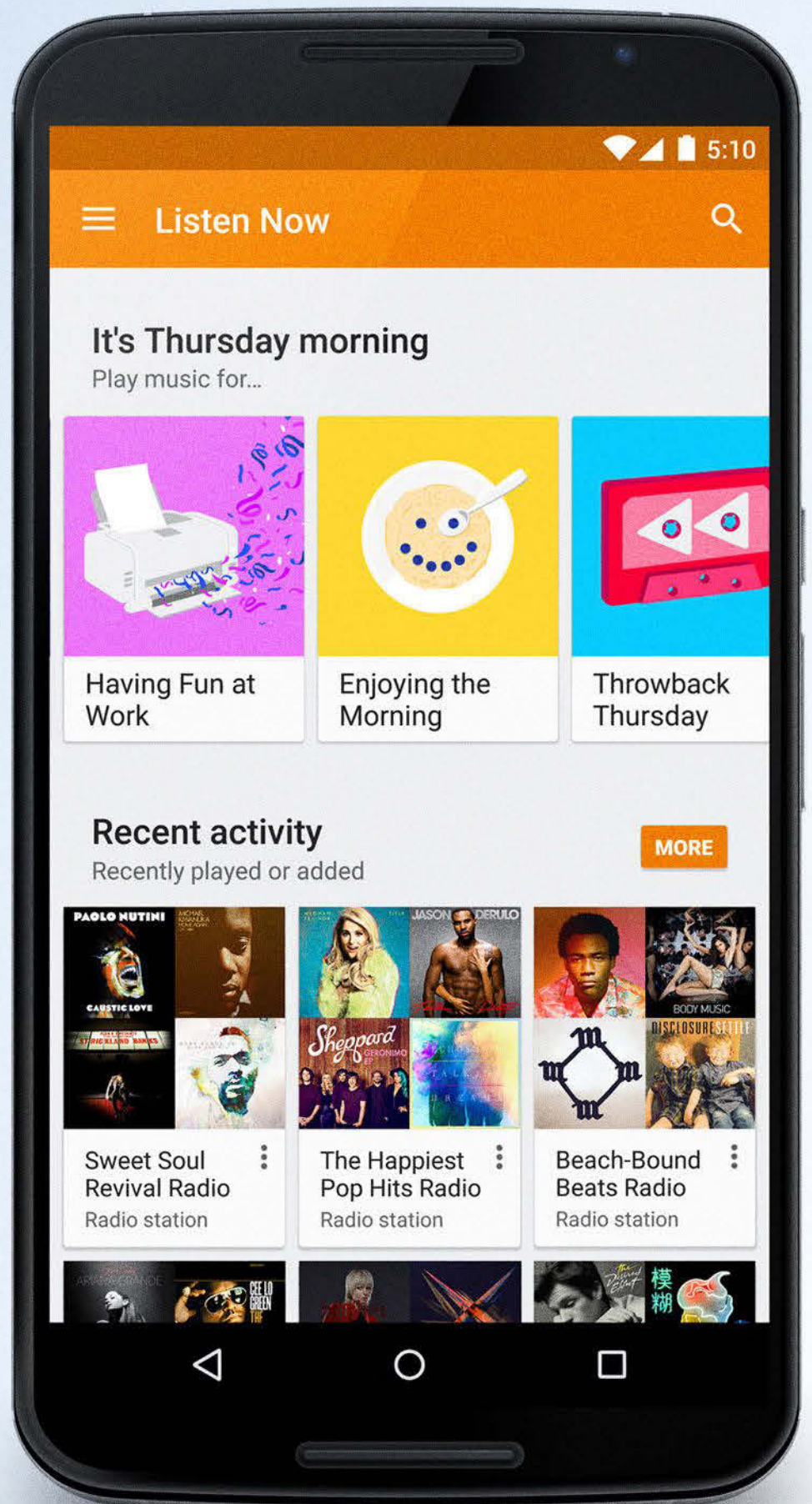


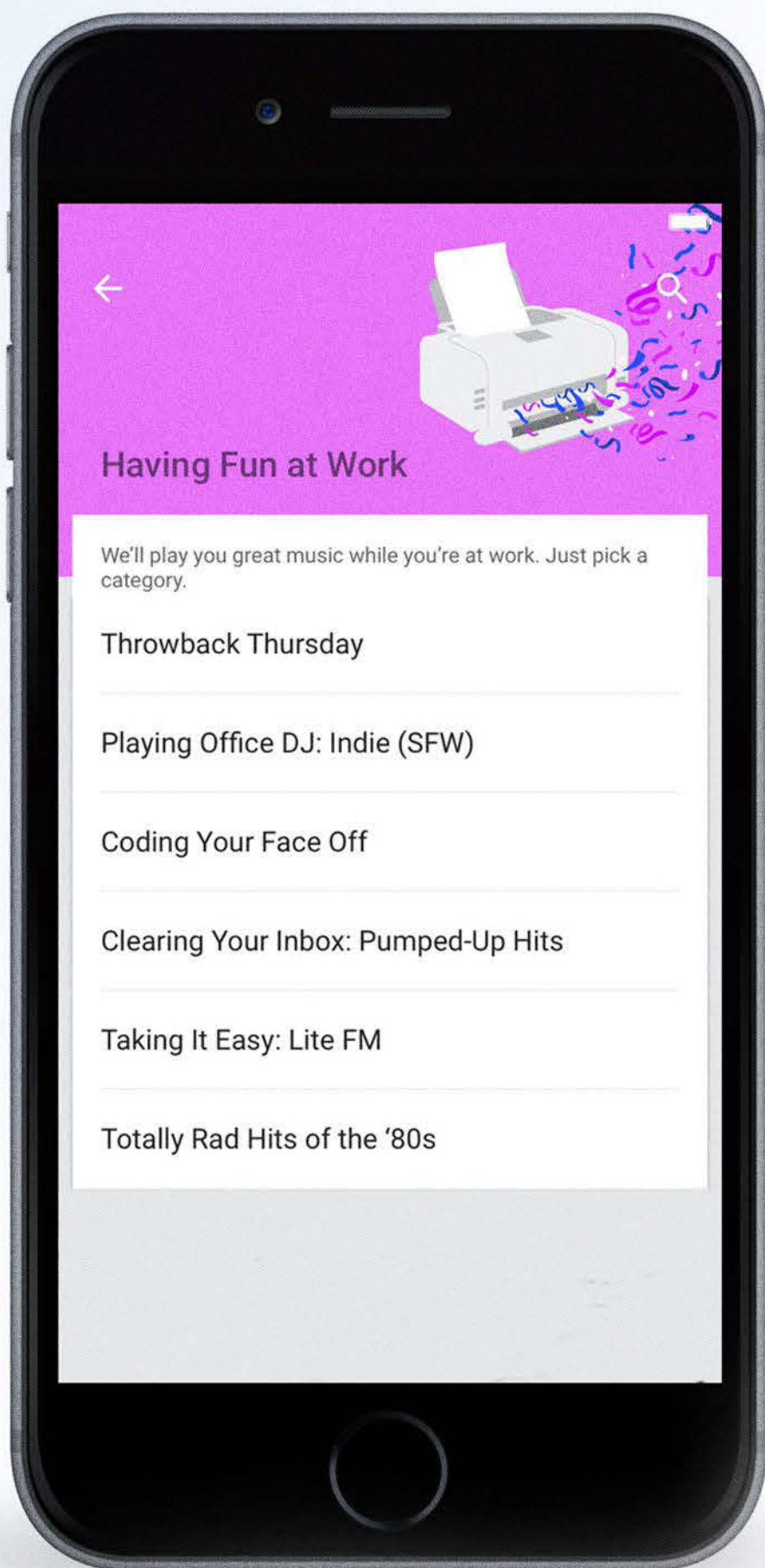
Google is adding a free tier to its subscription streaming music service in the U.S., aiming to convert the millions of people who click on the Google Play Music app every month but turn away because they're prompted for payment information.

The service uses Songza, an Internet radio app that Google acquired a year ago but whose innovations it had reserved for paying customers.

Now playlists curated by Songza music experts, like Drop-a-Beat Workout and Songs to Raise Your Kids To, will be available to U.S. users for free, interspersed with ads. Playlists that are







automatically generated according to genres, songs or artists will also be available.

Google hopes the free tier will entice users to pay \$10 a month for a subscription that unlocks features like on-demand playback without ads, offline listening, and use of the YouTube Music Key app, a music streaming service that includes videos and is still in development.

Zahavah Levine, vice president of content partnerships for Google Play Music, said the free tier is a way to engage curious users.

Up until now, this has been a lost opportunity to bring more people in, she said.

According to publishers' data verified by royalty tracking firm Audiam, Google Play Music had around 815,000 paying subscribers in the U.S. in December 2014, far behind market leader Spotify with 4.7 million. Spotify said this month that it now has 20 million paying subscribers globally.

Along with video ads that will play before songs, banners and interactive pitches, Google will also plug its paid service. For now, Google is not announcing any expansion of the free tier outside the U.S., though the paid plan is now available in 52 countries.



WINNERS AND LOSERS FROM THE E3 VIDEO-GAME SHOW

Station®

The video-game industry's annual Electronic Entertainment Expo, which occupied the Los Angeles Convention Center this past week, was an overwhelming, exhausting experience - so many games, so little time. But most of the attendees had a similar reaction: "This is really fun." Still, some companies came off better than others. So who won E3?

MICROSOFT VS. SONY

At this point in the Xbox One/PlayStation 4 battle, exclusive games are the best way to attract new buyers. Microsoft's Xbox has "Halo 5: Guardians," "Gears 4," "Rise of the Tomb Raider" and the endearingly weird "Cuphead." Sony's PS4 has "Uncharted 4: A Thief's End," "The Last Guardian," "Horizon: Zero Dawn," "Dreams" and the spooky "What Remains of Edith Finch." WINNER: Slight edge to Sony if the long-awaited "Last Guardian" lives up to its promise.





OLD VS. NEW

Microsoft won over many fans by promising it would be making the most of the games for its previous console, the Xbox 360, playable on the newer Xbox One. Sony's announcement of a remake of 1997's "Final Fantasy VII" drew rapturous applause. But there are still plenty of eye-catching new titles on the horizon, from the universe-spanning "No Man's Sky" to the down-and-dirty brawler "For Honor." Even established properties like "Fallout" and "Call of Duty" have some new tricks up their sleeves. WINNER: New.

NINTENDO VS. ITS FANS

Nintendo die-hards took to social media to express their frustration with the company's threadbare E3 lineup. Nintendo President Saturo Iwata responded with . well, not exactly an apology, but at least an acknowledgement of the negative feedback. Nintendo's still a huge part of E3, but it isn't doing much to turn around the fortunes of its fading Wii U. WINNER: The fans. They may not be happy, but they're justified.








PROJECT MORPHEUS VS. OCULUS RIFT

Two companies are spearheading the drive to make immersive, three-dimensional virtual reality the next big thing in electronic amusement. Sony's Project Morpheus is still rough around the edges, though we were quite taken with a Harmonix-designed app that lets users zone out to psychedelic images synched to music. The Oculus Rift, though, has come a long way, making this critic feel for the first time that this was exploration of a real 3D environment. WINNER: Oculus.



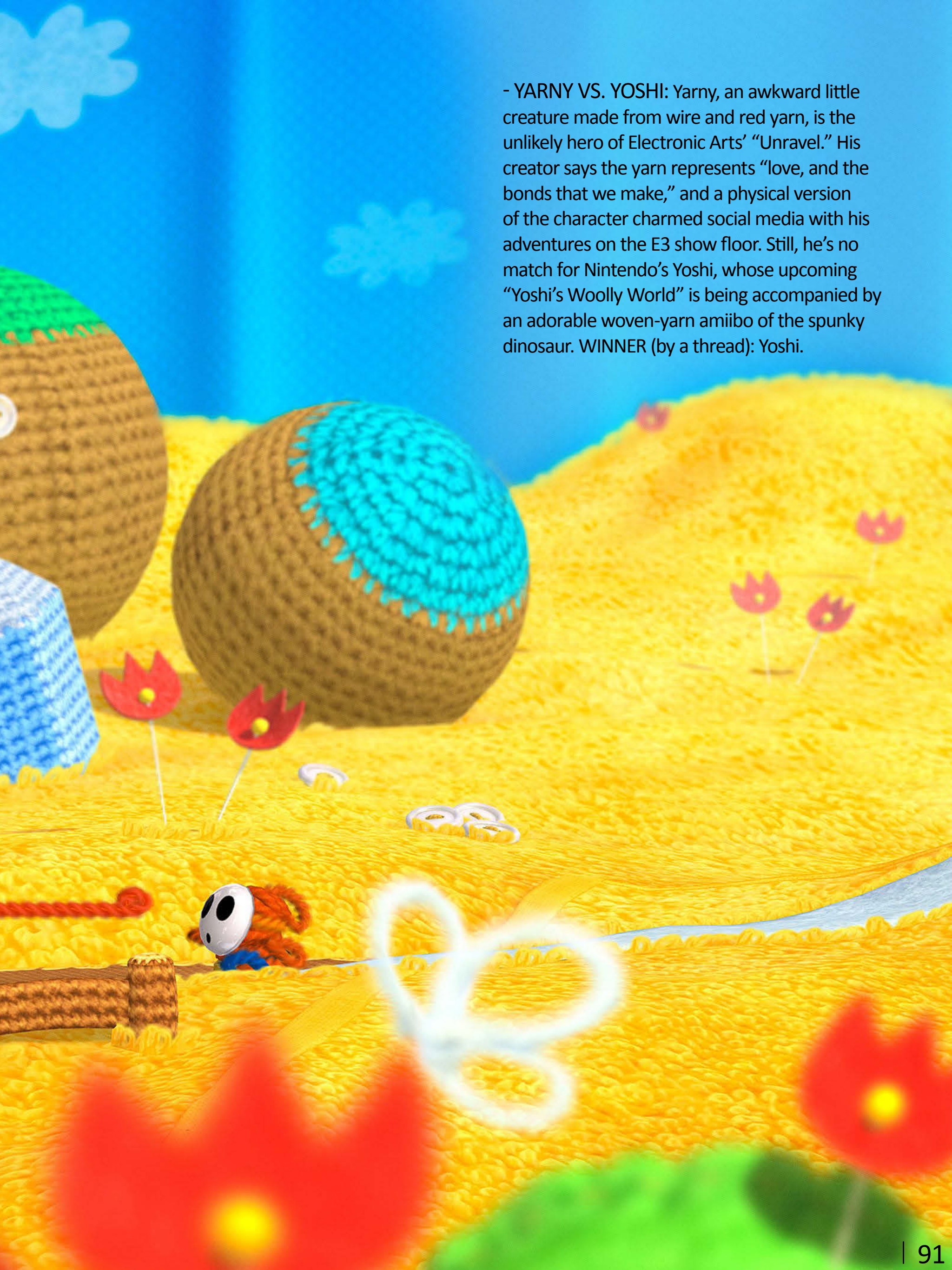




“TOYS TO LIFE” MELEE: This category, in which physical toys become animated onscreen characters, got more crowded with Warner Bros.’ “Lego Dimensions,” which features Batman, Scooby-Doo and favorites from “The Lord of the Rings” and “The Lego Movie.” Disney has added the cast of “Star Wars” to its “Infinity 3.0.” Nintendo’s adorable “Animal Crossing” critters are heading for the amiibo lineup, and Donkey Kong and Bowser are crossing over to Activision’s “Skylanders.” That franchise is also adding toy vehicles, so don’t expect it to put on the brakes anytime soon. WINNER: “Skylanders,” the original and still champ.



- YARNY VS. YOSHI: Yarny, an awkward little creature made from wire and red yarn, is the unlikely hero of Electronic Arts' "Unravel." His creator says the yarn represents "love, and the bonds that we make," and a physical version of the character charmed social media with his adventures on the E3 show floor. Still, he's no match for Nintendo's Yoshi, whose upcoming "Yoshi's Woolly World" is being accompanied by an adorable woven-yarn amiibo of the spunky dinosaur. WINNER (by a thread): Yoshi.



TOP Free Apps

iOS



#01 – Fallout Shelter

By Bethesda Softworks LLC

Category: Games

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#02 – Facebook Messenger

By Facebook, Inc.

Category: Social Networking

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#03 – Facebook

By Facebook, Inc.

Category: Social Networking

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#04 – YouTube

By Google, Inc.

Category: Photo & Video

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#05 – Instagram

By Instagram, Inc.

Category: Photo & Video

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#06 – Snapchat

By Snapchat, Inc.

Category: Photo & Video

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#07 – Pandora Radio

By Pandora Media, Inc.

Category: Music

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



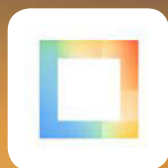
#08 – Netflix

By Netflix, Inc.

Category: Entertainment

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#09 – Layout from Instagram

By Instagram, Inc.

Category: Photo & Video

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#10 – Google Maps

By Google, Inc.

Category: Navigation

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#01 – OS X Yosemite

By Apple

Category: Utilities

Compatibility: OS X 10.6.8 or later



#02 – Slack

By Slack Technologies, Inc.

Category: Business

Compatibility: OS X 10.6 or later, 64-bit processor



#03 – Dr. Cleaner

By Trend Micro

Category: Utilities

Compatibility: OS X 10.9 or later, 64-bit processor



#04 – Xcode

By Apple

Category: Developer Tools

Compatibility: OS X 10.8.4 or later



#05 – App for Instagram

By Joacim Ståhl

Category: Social Networking

Compatibility: OS X 10.7 or later, 64-bit processor



#06 – Microsoft Remote Desktop

By Microsoft Corporation

Category: Business

Compatibility: OS X 10.7 or later, 64-bit processor



#07 – Microsoft OneNote

By Microsoft Corporation

Category: Productivity

Compatibility: OS X 10.9 or later



#08 – Evernote

By Evernote

Category: Productivity

Compatibility: OS X 10.7.5 or later, 64-bit processor



#09 – Kindle

By AMZN Mobile LLC

Category: Reference

Compatibility: OS X 10.6 or later



#10 – The Unarchiver

By Dag Agren

Category: Utilities

Compatibility: OS X 10.6.0 or later

TOP Free Apps

Mac OS X

TOP Paid Apps

iOS



#01 – Minecraft – Pocket Edition

By Mojang

Category: Games / Price: \$6.99

Requires iOS 5.1.1 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#02 – Heads Up!

By Warner Bros.

Category: Games / Price: \$0.99

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#03 – Dark Sky

By Jackadam

Category: Weather / Price: \$3.99

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



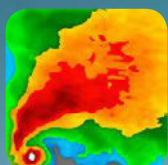
#04 – Plague Inc.

By Ndemic Creations

Category: Games / Price: \$0.99

Requires iOS 4.3 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#05 – NOAA Radar Pro

By IAC Search & Media Europe Ltd.

Category: Weather / Price: \$1.99

Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#06 – NBA JAM by EA SPORTS™

By Electronic Arts

Category: Games / Price: \$0.99

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#07 – TexMoji

By C O Holdings LLC

Category: Utilities / Price: \$1.99

Requires iOS 8.3 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#08 – Facetune

By Lightricks Ltd.

Category: Photo & Video / Price: \$3.99

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPhone 5c, iPhone 5s, iPhone 6, iPhone 6 Plus, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus.



#09 – Geometry Dash

By RobTop Games AB

Category: Games / Price: \$1.99

Requires iOS 5.1.1 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#10 – Minute Workout Challenge

By Fitness Guide Inc

Category: Health & Fitness / Price: \$2.99

Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

This app is optimized for iPhone 5.



#01 – AntiVirus Sentinel Pro

By Calin Popescu

Category: Utilities / Price: \$9.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.7 or later, 64-bit processor



#02 – GarageBand

By Apple

Category: Music / Price: \$4.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.9 or later

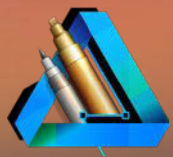


#03 – OS X Server

By Apple

Category: Utilities / Price: \$19.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.9.5 or later



#04 – Affinity Designer

By Serif Labs

Category: Graphics & Design / Price: \$39.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.7 or later, 64-bit processor



#05 – Fantastical 2

By Flexibits Inc.

Category: Productivity / Price: \$39.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.10 or later, 64-bit processor



#06 – FaceTime

By Apple

Category: Social Networking / Price: \$0.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.6.6 or later



#07 – Logic Pro X

By Apple

Category: Music / Price: \$199.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.8.4 or later, 64-bit processor



#08 – 1Password

By AgileBits Inc.

Category: Productivity / Price: \$34.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.10 or later, 64-bit processor



#09 – Final Cut Pro

By Apple

Category: Video / Price: \$299.99

Compatibility: OS X 10.10.2 or later, 64-bit processor



#10 – BetterSnapTool

By Andreas Hegenberg

Category: Productivity / Price: \$1.99

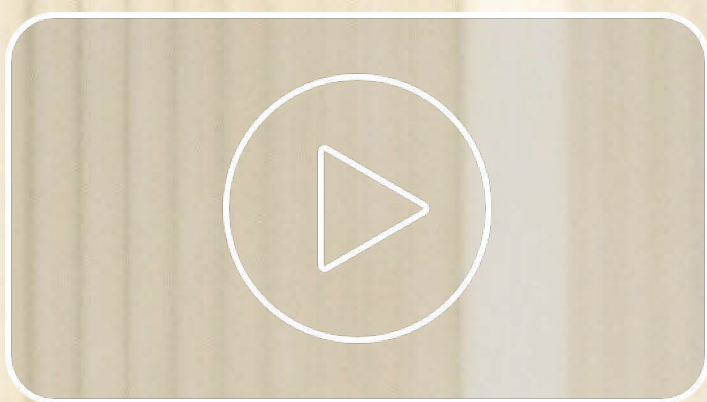
Compatibility: OS X 10.6 or later, 64-bit processor

TOP Paid Apps

Mac OS X

iTunes

Review



Trailer

Movies
& *TV Shows*



iTunes Preview



by David Gordon Green
Genre: Romance
Released: 2015
Price: \$6.99 (Rent HD)

★★★★★
22 Ratings

Rotten Tomatoes
 46%

Manglehorn

Delivering arguably his finest performance in years, Al Pacino plays small-town locksmith A.J. Manglehorn, who was left heartbroken by the loss many years ago of the woman he loved. But then along comes a kindhearted bank teller, Dawn (Holly Hunter), who may just be able to draw the eccentric key-maker out of his shell.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Manglehorn is directed by David Gordon Green.
2. Harmony Korine and Chris Messina also star.
3. The film was **selected to compete for the Golden Lion at the 71st Venice International Film Festival.**
4. **Shooting of the movie took place in Austin, Texas in November 2013.**
5. It was also **screened in the Special Presentations section at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival.**

See more in
iTunes





Interview with David Gordon Green

American Heist

When James Caley (Hayden Christensen) and older brother Frankie (Adrien Brody) commit a crime together, the latter ends up taking the rap to save the former's life. A now-released Frankie, back on the streets and with no money, turns to his underworld connections and convinces James to accompany him on one last job.

FIVE FACTS:

1. American Heist is directed by the Armenian director of films and commercials, Sarik Andreasyan.
2. It is **based on the 1959 film The Great St. Louis Bank Robbery.**
3. Jordana Brewster and Akon also star, as Emily and Sugar respectively.
4. The movie was **screened in the Special Presentations section of the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival.**
5. Principal photography **began in June 2013 in New Orleans, Louisiana.**



iTunes Preview



Genre: Thriller
Released: 2015
Price: \$9.99 (Rent HD)

★★★★★
47 Ratings

Rotten Tomatoes



20%



Trailer



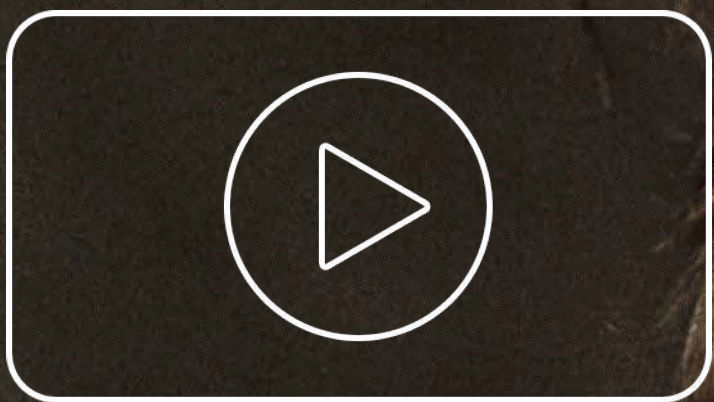
Behind the Scenes with Jordana Brewster





iTunes

Review



Nothing Without Love

Music



iTunes Preview



Genre: Alternative
Released: Jun 12, 2015
12 Songs
Price: \$7.99



390 Ratings

Grand Romantic

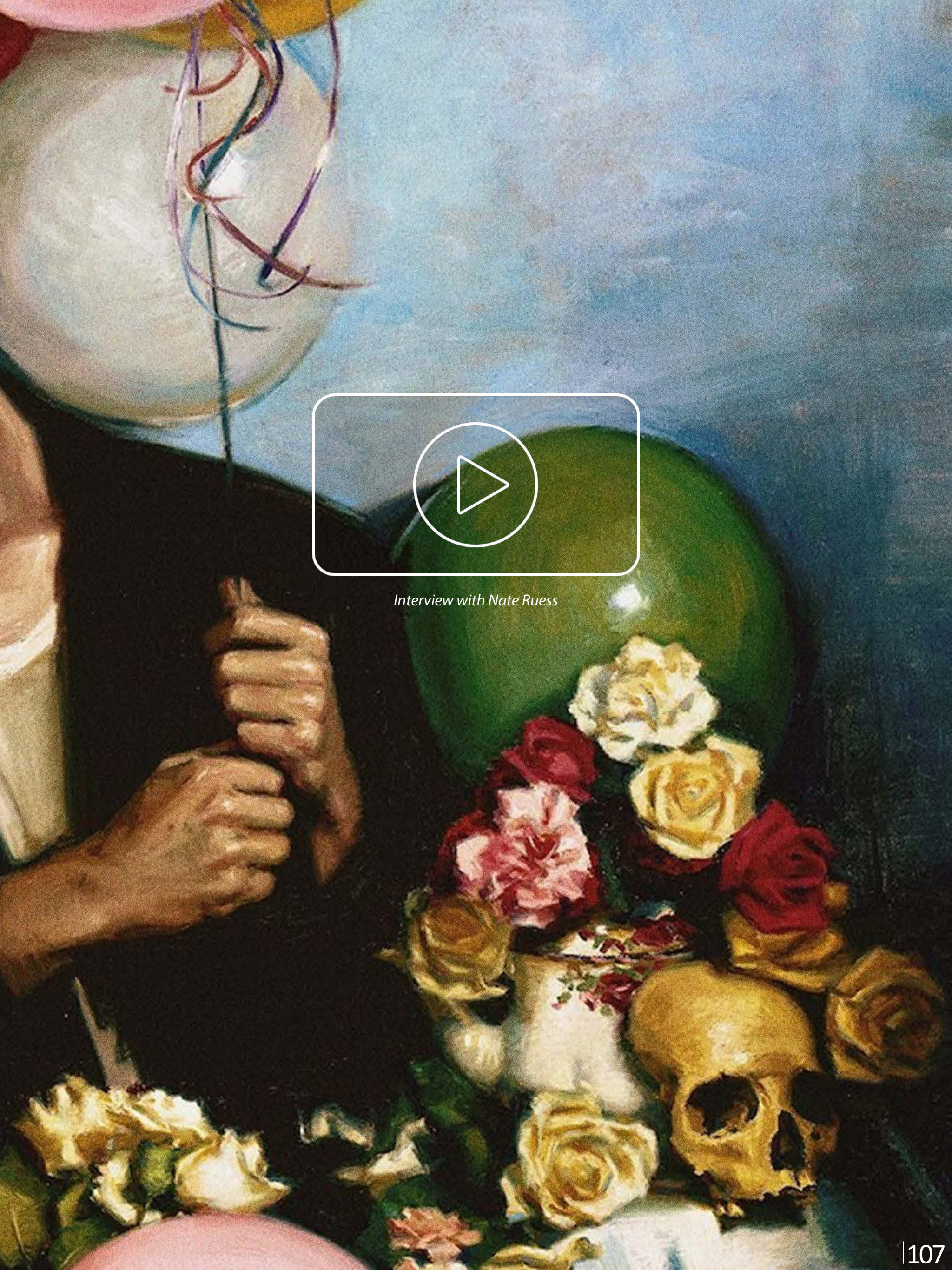
Nate Ruess

If you don't recognize the name, you will almost certainly recognize the voice, Ruess having been the lead singer of indie pop hit-makers Fun since its 2008 formation. Now, for the first time, he strikes out on his own, his debut album spearheaded by a single - "Nothing Without Love" - that he recently performed on Jimmy Fallon's late-night show.

FIVE FACTS:

1. He was born Nathaniel Joseph Ruess in Iowa City, Iowa on February 26, 1982.
2. In 2001, at the age of 19, he launched the band the Format with longtime best friend Sam Means.
3. With Fun, he scored the 2011 number one US Billboard Hot 100 single "We Are Young", featuring Janelle Monáe.
4. "Some Nights", the follow-up single from the album of the same name, peaked in the top three of the same chart.
5. Writing for Alternative Press, Jack Appleby **described the album as "proof-positive more Nate Ruess is always a good thing."**





Interview with Nate Ruess

Before This World

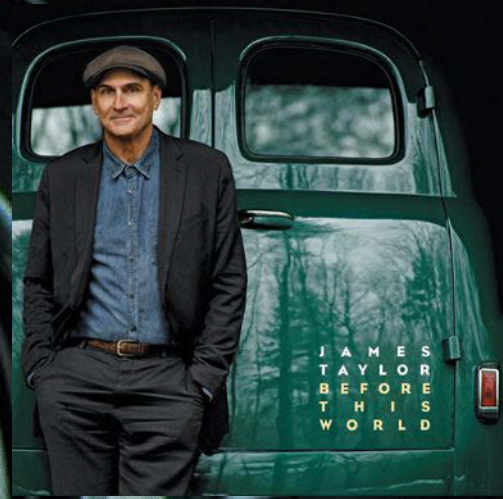
James Taylor

The five-time Grammy Award winner's 17th studio album is also his first album of original material since 2002's *October Road*, and it's fair to say that it has been worth the wait. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee worked with producer Dave O'Donnell, drummer Steve Gadd and bassist Jimmy Johnson, writing nine of the 10 songs himself.

FIVE FACTS:

1. James Vernon Taylor was born in Boston, Massachusetts on March 12, 1948.
2. His breakthrough single was the number three hit "Fire and Rain" in 1970.
3. He achieved his first number one hit the following year with the Carole King song "You've Got a Friend".
4. Taylor's four siblings, Alex, Livingston, Hugh and Kate as well as his children with Carly Simon, Ben and Sally, have all had careers in music.
5. In 2000, he was inducted into both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame.





iTunes Preview



Genre: Pop
Released: Jun 15, 2015
10 Songs
Price: \$11.99

★★★★★
247 Ratings



Montana (Live)



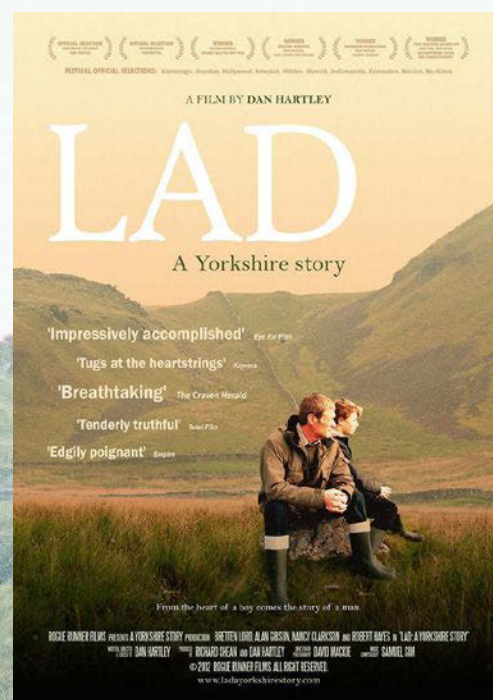


Teaser

Lad: A Yorkshire Story

Finally, while not one of our featured movies in this review, an honorable mention must go to Lad: A Yorkshire Story, the UK self-distributed film that has won 21 international festival awards and proved a hit with viewers and critics around the world, despite being made on just a fraction of the budget of the Hollywood blockbusters.

Based on the story of a teenage boy coming to terms with the loss of his dad in Yorkshire, England, Lad has been described as “a possible turning point in self-distribution”. Although it remains to be seen whether it lives up to that billing, there’s no doubt that it is a film that has firmly punched above its weight.



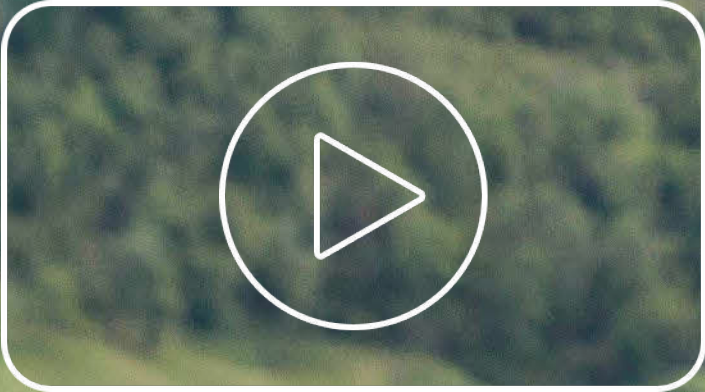
iTunes Preview

Genre: Independent
Released: 2015
Price: £7.99

★★★★★
36 Ratings







Trailer



SHOWTIME PRICE TRIMMED TO \$9 IN DEAL FOR HULU SUBSCRIBERS




The price of Showtime is being trimmed to \$9 a month for Hulu subscribers in a deal that will make it the first premium pay TV service offered through Hulu.

That's less than the \$11 a month it costs to access Showtime's app on its own and would bring the price of Showtime plus Hulu Plus to \$17 a month.

Showtime shows will be integrated into the Hulu platform and be available ahead of the July 12 premiere of Season 3 of "Ray Donovan."





Showtime, owned by CBS Corp., has been pushing distribution of its service separate from traditional cable and satellite TV packages in the last month, similar to rival HBO. Earlier this month, Showtime announced its app would be available on Apple TVs, Roku streaming equipment and Sony's PlayStation Vue online TV service.

Showtime is also available from traditional cable and satellite TV providers for \$10 a month to existing TV subscribers.

Showtime CEO Matt Blank said that prices are set by retailers. He told The Associated Press in an interview, "Hulu is in fact subsidizing the price difference."

He also said he wasn't worried about the lower price causing existing Showtime customers on other platforms to switch. "I don't think someone is going to drop a big package of video services to save a dollar on Showtime."

Showtime has nearly 24 million existing subscribers while Hulu Plus has nearly 9 million.

Tim Connolly, Hulu's senior vice president of distribution and strategic partnerships, said the price cut was a way to "reward our existing subscribers and attract new ones."



faceb

FACEBOOK NOW WORTH MORE THAN WAL-MART ON STOCK MARKET

ook.

Facebook is now bigger than Wal-Mart, at least when it comes to its value on the stock market.

The world's biggest online social network knocked the world's largest retailer out of the top 10 list of the highest-valued companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index on Monday and the gap widened on Tuesday.

While the switch is mostly symbolic - nothing specific happened this week to warrant it, and the difference between the two giants is not that big - it signals investors' insatiable appetite for successful tech stocks. Apple, Microsoft and Google top the list of the highest-valued companies in the U.S., and Facebook looks to be on its way to joining them.

A company's market value is calculated by multiplying the number of shares of stock it has in circulation by the current price of one share.

Facebook Inc. was valued at \$238 billion in Tuesday afternoon trading, according to FactSet. Its stock was up \$2.77, or 3.3 percent, at \$87.51.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. was valued at \$234 billion. Its stock dipped 30 cents to \$72.49.

Facebook, which is based in Menlo Park, California, has been on a roll this past year, its shares up about 34 percent in the past year compared with just 8.2 percent for the S&P 500 index. Its quarterly results have consistently surpassed expectations.

Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart, meanwhile, asked for investor patience after its most-recent earnings report showed a 7 percent profit decline due to the effects of the strong dollar and higher worker wages and spending on its online operations.

Comparing the two companies' financial results, though, shows just how much Wall Street is investing in growth and potential - Facebook - versus existing size and might - Wal-Mart. In the first three months of this year, Facebook's total revenue of \$3.54 billion amounted to just a little more than Wal-Mart's total profit for its fiscal first quarter of \$3.34 billion. But while Facebook saw revenue grow 42 percent in the same period, Wal-Mart's declined slightly.

That said, none of the nine companies that follow Apple in the top 10 come even close to the mighty iPhone and Mac maker, whose market capitalization is about \$735 billion.





+4.97

FB

facebook

NASDAQ LISTED

FB

FB

ok

ED

0%

4.97

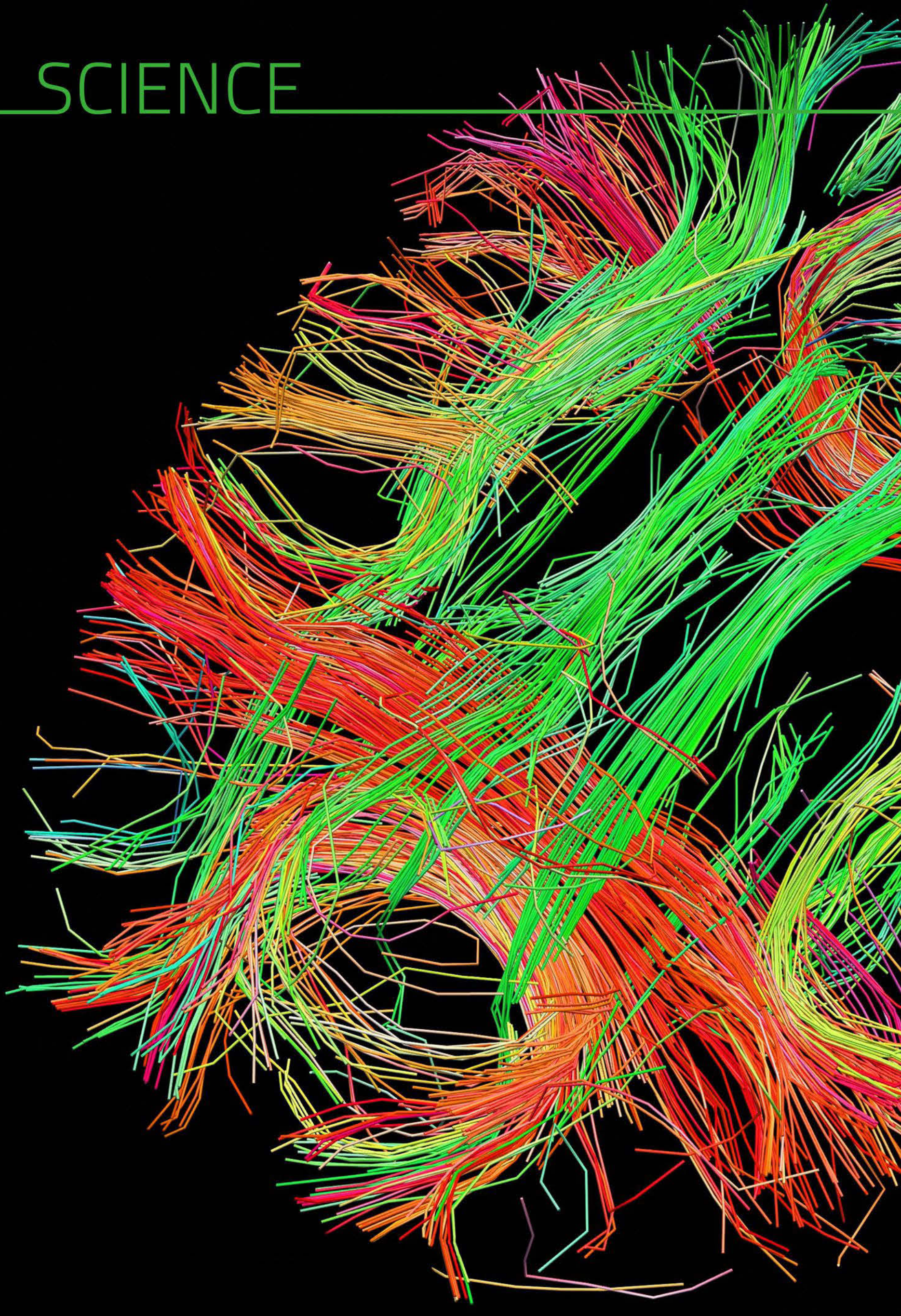
43.00

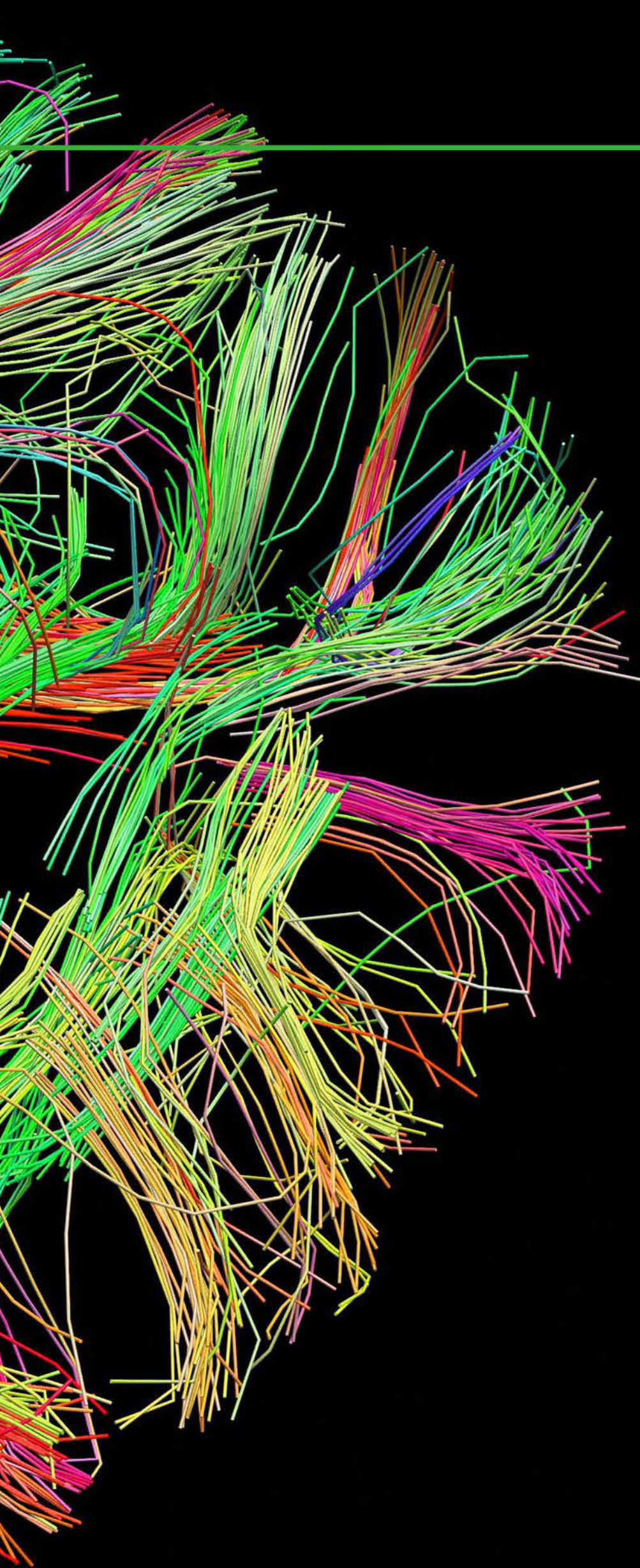
+4.97

FB

FB

SCIENCE





LASERS,
MAGNETISM
ALLOW
GLIMPSES OF
THE HUMAN

To the untrained eye, the graph looked like a very volatile day on Wall Street - jagged peaks and valleys in red, blue and green, displayed on a wall. But the story it told was not about economics.

It was a glimpse into the brains of Shaul Yahil and Shaw Bronner, two researchers at a Yale lab, as they had a little chat.

"This is a fork," Yahil observed, describing the image on his computer. "A fork is something you use to stab food while you're eating it. Common piece of cutlery in the West."

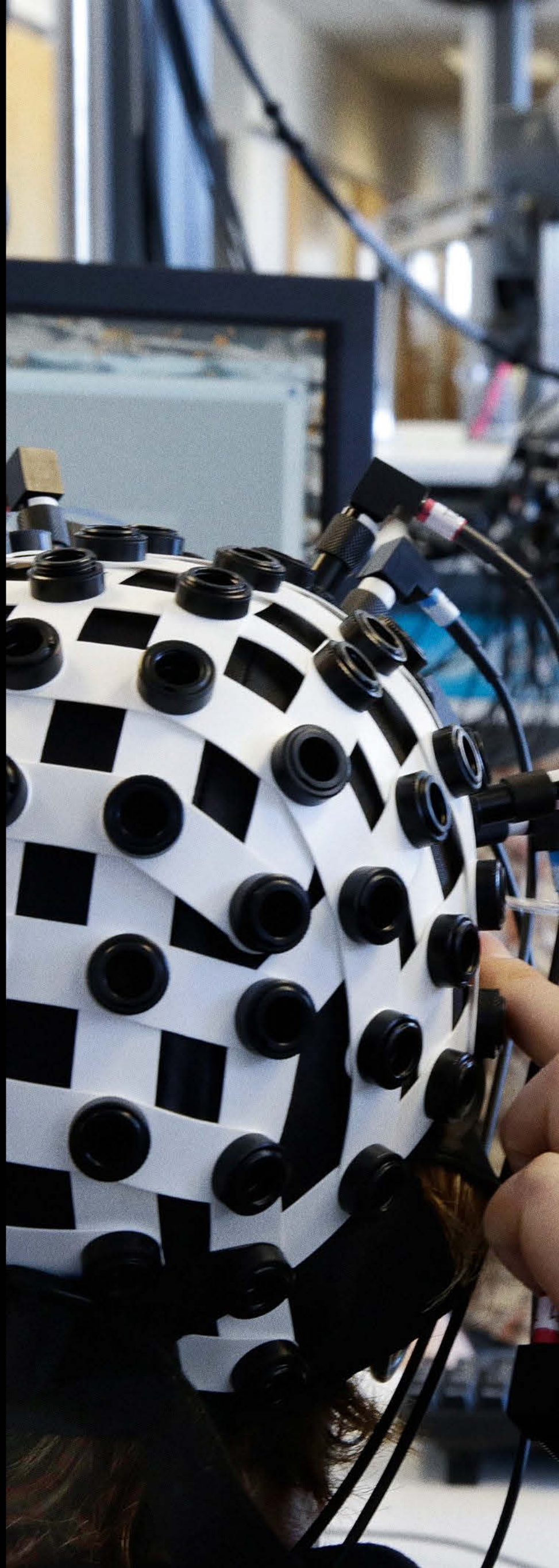
"It doesn't look like a real fancy sterling silver fork, but very useful," Bronner responded. And then she described her own screen: "This looks like a baby chimpanzee ..."

The jagged, multicolored images depicted what was going on in the two researchers' heads - two brains in conversation, carrying out an intricate dance of internal activity. This is no parlor trick. The brain-tracking technology at work is just a small part of the quest to answer abiding questions about the workings of a three-pound chunk of fatty tissue with the consistency of cold porridge.

How does this collection of nearly 100 billion densely packed nerve cells, acting through circuits with maybe 100 trillion connections, let us think, feel, act and perceive our world? How does this complex machine go wrong and make people depressed, or delusional, or demented? What can be done about that?

Such questions spurred President Barack Obama to launch the BRAIN initiative in 2013. Its aim: to spur development of new tools to investigate the brain. Europe and Japan are also pursuing major efforts in brain research.

The mysteries of this organ, which sucks up about 20 percent of the body's energy, are many and profound. But with a collection of sophisticated devices, scientists are peering





inside the working brains of people for clues to what makes us tick.

At the Yale lab, Yahil and Bronner were demonstrating a technique being used there to investigate how our brains let us engage with other people.

That's one of the most basic questions in neuroscience, as well as an ability impaired in autism and schizophrenia, said lab director Joy Hirsch.

As the two researchers chatted, each wore a black-and-white skullcap from which 64 slender black cables trailed away like dreadlocks. At the tip of half of those fiber optic cables, weak laser beams slipped through their skulls and penetrated about an inch into their brains. There, the beams bounced off blood and reflected back to be picked up by the other half of the cables.

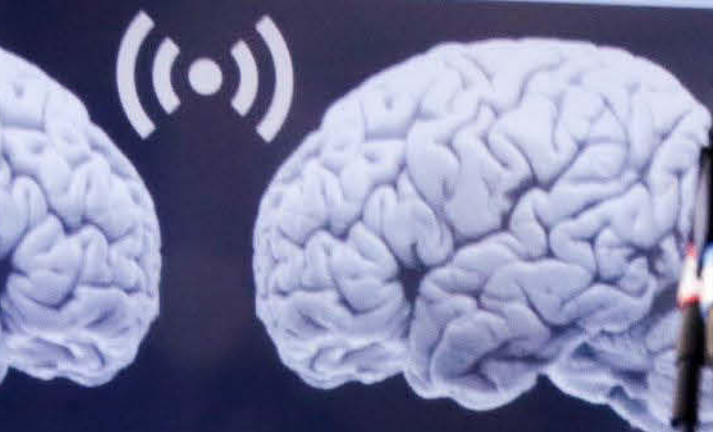
Those reflections revealed how much oxygen that blood was carrying. And since brain circuits use more oxygen when they're busier, the measurements provided an indirect index to patterns of brain activity as Bronner listened to Yahil and replied, and vice versa.

The mostly widely used brain-mapping technique, however, is a different one called functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI. Basically, fMRI does what Hirsch's laser system does: It uses oxygen levels in blood as tracers of brain-cell activity. But it penetrates much deeper into the brain, using powerful magnetic fields. That lets it seek subtle magnetic signals to track blood oxygen levels on a tiny scale; a bump in oxygen levels indicates active brain cells nearby.

The fMRI technology can detect vanishingly tiny changes in brain activity that are associated with tackling particular tasks. And it can show the activity of a brain that is not focused on doing a task. In this resting state, the brain continues to



Communication Between Humans:
of neural mechanisms for dialogue



Joy Hirsch, Ph.D.
Brain Function Laboratory
Yale School of Medicine



hum along, and scientists are studying what this can reveal about it and its illnesses.

Another major emphasis in brain mapping these days is delineating the circuitry that lets the brain operate.

Communication flows along an estimated 150,000 miles of nerve fibers in the average brain. Individual fibers are too fine to see in brain-scanning machines, but they form bundles that can be detected as they cross the deep central portion of the brain.

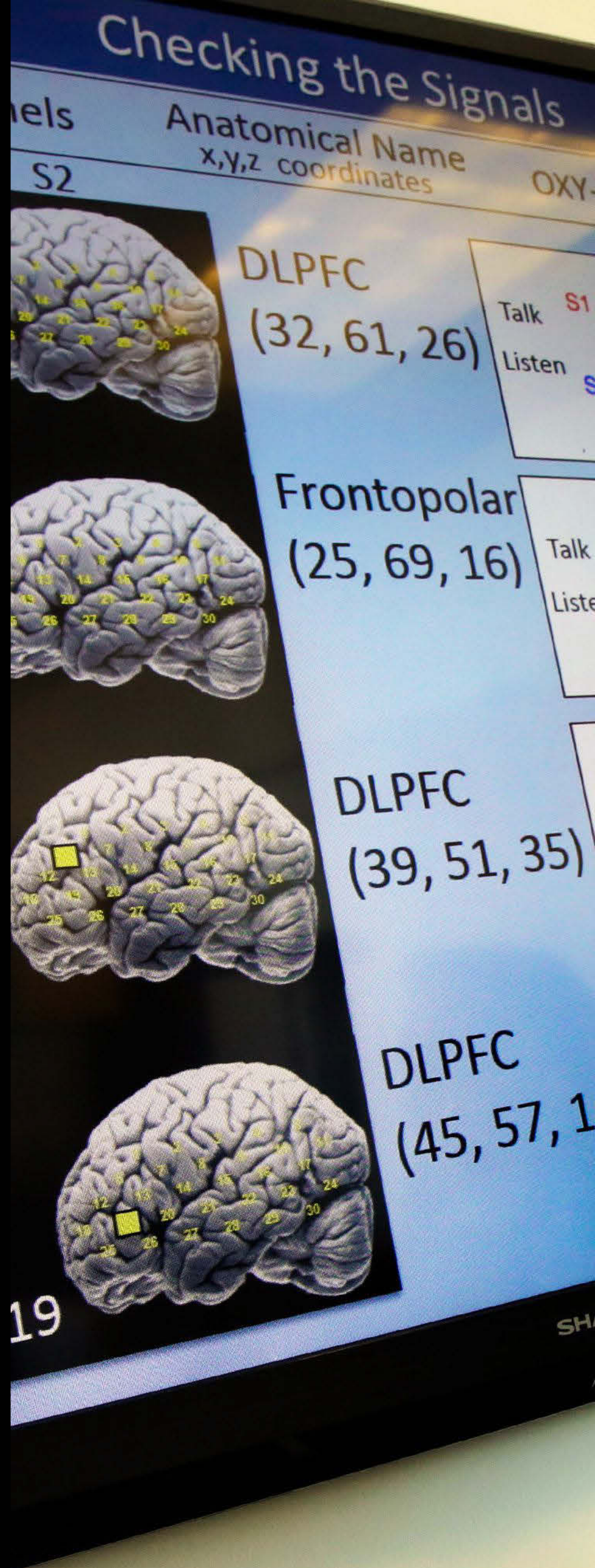
Those bundles are one focus of researchers who are mapping out the brain's "connectome," the complex web of these connections between areas of gray matter, where thinking takes place. One goal is better understanding what parcels of tissue do what jobs in the brain's outer layer, the cerebral cortex.

Some brain-scanning research rises from the informative to the truly startling, like decoding - looking at brain activity patterns to figure out what somebody is seeing, or even thinking about.

In 2011, for example, researchers reported that they could reconstruct very rough visual replicas of movie clips that people were watching while their brains were scanned. And two years later, Japanese scientists reported evidence that they could get some idea of what people were dreaming about - at least, better than chance under highly controlled conditions.

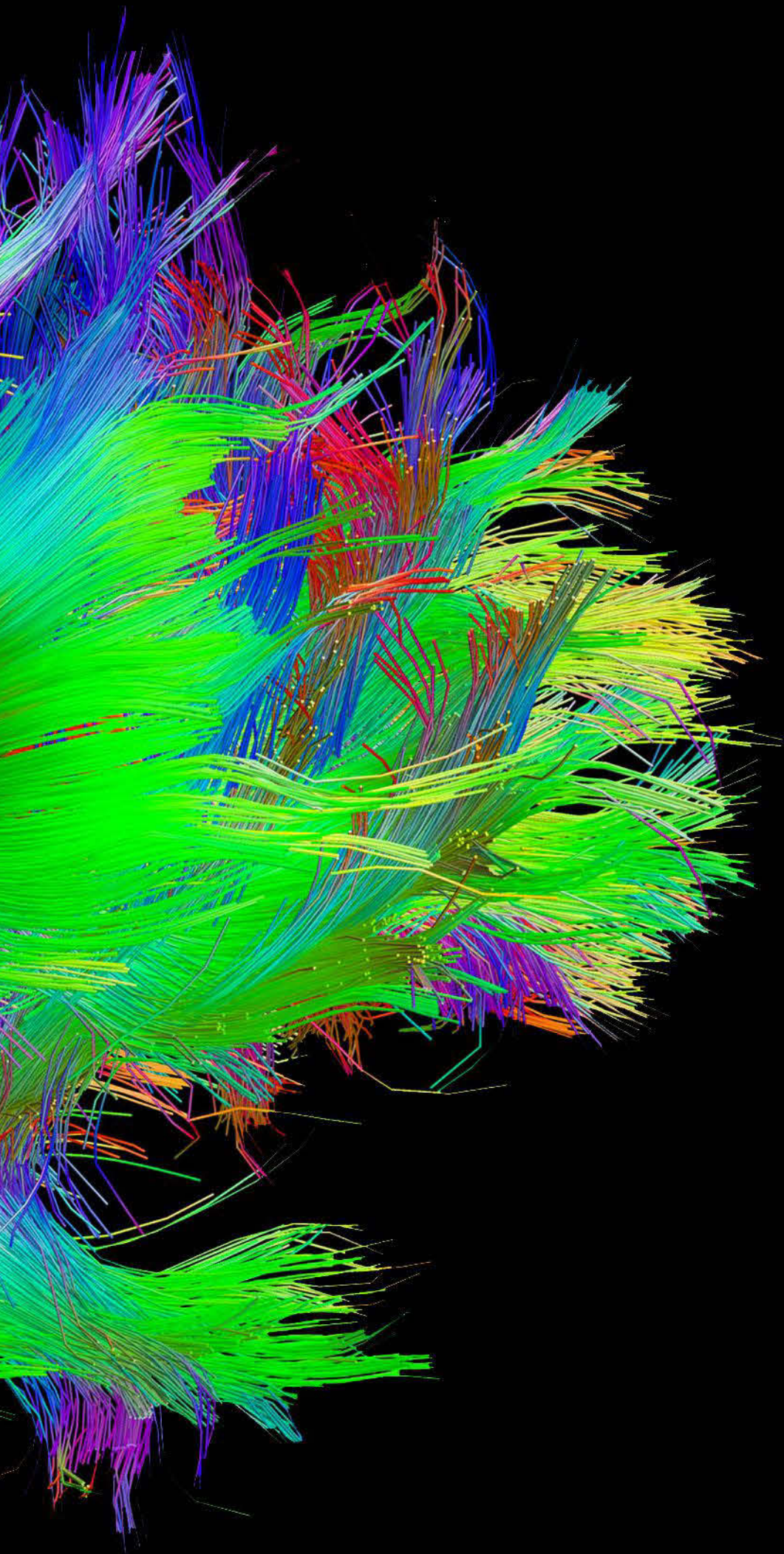
Such findings are valuable for learning how the brain is organized. And in the near term, decoding technology might help people whose medical condition prevents normal conversation, said Jack Gallant of the University of California, Berkeley.

If portable devices that peer closely into the brain can be developed, new possibilities open up for brain decoding. And not just for scientists.









Gallant foresees a future in which composers write music just by imagining it. Or “you can just think about the picture you want to paint” and let a computer do the rest.

Writing a letter, he says “would be like dictation, except you would just be talking to yourself.”

And in the future, why be confined to your own language?

“I can think in English and my little brain hat would read my thoughts, send it to Google and it would come back in Japanese,” he says. “You’d talk out of a little speaker in your hat.”





WHITE HOUSE
ACTION
NEEDED NOW
TO SLOW
CLIMATE
CHANGE





Failure to act on climate change could cause an estimated 57,000 deaths a year in the United States from poor air quality by 2100, the Obama administration argued in a report released Monday that warns of dire effects of global warming. The report says inaction on climate change could cost billions of dollars a year in damage from rising sea levels, increased wildfires and drought, as well as higher costs for electricity to cool homes and businesses in hotter temperatures. The Environmental Protection Agency report argues that action now on climate could save billions in avoided costs for maintenance and repairs on roads and bridges made vulnerable by global warming and save the lives of an estimated 12,000 people in 49 U.S. cities who could die from extreme temperatures in 2100.

The report comes as Republicans in Congress seek to undo the administration's environmental policies, including an expected plan by the EPA to target coal-fired power plants, and days after Pope Francis issued a stern warning about global warming's consequences, especially for the poor and underdeveloped nations. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said last month was the hottest May around the globe in 136 years of global records.

A global health commission organized by the prestigious British medical journal Lancet recommended on Monday that substituting cleaner energy worldwide for coal will reduce air pollution and give Earth a better chance at avoiding dangerous climate change. The panel said hundreds of thousands of lives each year are at stake and global warming "threatens to undermine the last half century of gains in development and global health."

The White House report is part of a weeklong effort to emphasize climate change to mark the two-year anniversary of a "climate action plan" announced by President Barack Obama.





While the most severe effects of global warming would not be felt for decades, the Obama administration said decisions about climate change need to be made now.

“Decisions are not going to wait 50 years,” EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy told reporters at a White House briefing. “They are today’s decisions.” McCarthy called the report “a wake-up call for some who may not be aware” of the potential damages of climate change.

Obama, in an interview out Monday with comedian Marc Maron for his popular podcast, said he was acting on his own on power plants and other environmental regulations because the GOP-controlled Congress has blocked more comprehensive efforts.

“We’ll get that stuff done,” Obama said, adding that “it would be a lot better, it would be a lot more helpful, if we had some cooperation from Congress, and if I didn’t have the chairman of the energy and environment committee in the Senate holding up a snowball as if that was proof that climate change wasn’t happening, that would be useful.”

Obama’s comments referred to Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, who tossed a snowball in the Senate chamber in February to demonstrate his claim that global warming is a hoax.

The EPA report says actions to slow climate change could save about \$3.1 billion in expected costs from sea-level rise and storm surge in 2100, while the power sector could save as much as \$34 billion by 2050 in avoided costs for additional electricity for air conditioning and other uses.

An estimated \$3 billion in avoided damages from poor water quality could be saved by 2100, the report said.





Actions begun in the next few years could reduce droughts by at least 40 percent by 2100 and save an estimated 6 to 8 million acres from being burned by wildfires, the report said.

It said meaningful actions also could prevent the loss of about one-third of U.S. supplies of oysters, scallops and clams by 2100, as well as 35 percent of Hawaiian coral reefs.

Failure to act could lead to summers in Illinois to “feel like Louisiana” today, McCarthy said, while South Dakota summers may be as hot as those in Arkansas. The Republican-controlled House is expected to vote this week on a bill to scale back the plan on coal-fired power plants, the centerpiece of Obama’s second-term push to confront climate change.

The bill would allow states to opt out of the plan if the governor determines it would cause significant rate hikes for electricity or harm reliability of service in the state. The bill also would delay the rule until all court challenges are completed. The House also is expected to take up a separate spending bill that would bar the EPA from enforcing the power plant rules, cut the agency’s budget and attack other prominent EPA regulations on air and water pollution.

Obama has managed to thwart GOP efforts in the past, but Republicans are renewing their efforts now that they control the Senate as well as the House.





TOP 10 SONGS

GOOD FOR YOU (FEAT. A\$AP ROCKY)

RACHEL PLATTEN

CHEERLEADER

(FELIX JAEHN REMIX RADIO EDIT)

OMI

FIGHT SONG

RACHEL PLATTEN

BAD BLOOD (FEAT. KENDRICK LAMAR)

TAYLOR SWIFT

HONEY, I'M GOOD.

ANDY GRAMMER

CAN'T FEEL MY FACE

THE WEEKND

SHUT UP AND DANCE

WALK THE MOO

SEE YOU AGAIN (FEAT. CHARLIE PUTH)

WIZ KHALIFA

GIRL CRUSH

LITTLE BIG TOWN

WORTH IT (FEAT. KID INK)

FIFTH HARMONY





TOP

10 ALBUMS

**UNBREAKABLE SMILE
(BONUS TRACK VERSION)**

TORI KELLY

1989

TAYLOR SWIFT

DARK BEFORE DAWN

BREAKING BENJAMIN

PAGEANT MATERIAL

KACEY MUSGRAVES

BEFORE THIS WORLD

JAMES TAYLOR

WILDER MIND

MUMFORD & SONS

COMING HOME

LEON BRIDGES

GRAND ROMANTIC

NATE RUESS

BLURRYFACE

TWENTY ONE PILOTS

MONTEVALLO

SAM HUNT



OWN

TOP

10

MUSIC VIDEOS

BAD BLOOD (FEAT. KENDRICK LAMAR)

TAYLOR SWIFT

GIRL CRUSH

LITTLE BIG TOWN

UPTOWN FUNK (FEAT. BRUNO MARS)

MARK RONSON

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(LIVE AT THE KENNEDY CENTER HONORS)

[FEAT. JASON BONHAM]

HEART

FUN (FEAT. CHRIS BROWN)

PITBULL

DEAR FUTURE HUSBAND

MEGHAN TRAINOR

**HEY MAMA (FEAT. NICKI MINAJ, AFROJACK
& BEBE REXHA)**

DAVID GUETTA

THINKING OUT LOUD

ED SHEERAN

SHAKE IT OFF

TAYLOR SWIFT

WORTH IT (FEAT. KID INK)

FIFTH HARMONY





TOP 10 TV SHOWS

FIGHT THE SHIP

THE LAST SHIP, SEASON 2

#BATTLEOFTHEBODS

#RICHKIDS OF BEVERLY HILLS, SEASON 3

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

PRETTY LITTLE LIARS, SEASON 6

HISTORY YET TO BE WRITTEN

ORPHAN BLACK, SEASON 3

HOW IS LADY POLE?

JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL

GONE GIRL

MISTRESSES, SEASON 3 (US SERIES)

EPISODE ONE

POLDARK, SEASON 1

I'LL BE WATCHING YOU

MISTRESSES, SEASON 3 (US SERIES)

MIDNIGHT NEVER COME

SALEM, SEASON 2

SECONDO

HANNIBAL, SEASON 3

WARRIOR





TOP

**10
BOOKS**

GREY

E L JAMES

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

HOLLY MADISON

THE MELODY LINGERS ON

MARY HIGGINS CLARK

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

PAULA HAWKINS

WICKED CHARMS

JANET EVANOVICH & PHOEF SUTTON

SAFE AT LAST

MAYA BANKS

ON MY KNEES

J. KENNER

TRUTH OR DIE

JAMES PATTERSON & HOWARD ROUGHAN

PAPER TOWNS

JOHN GREEN

THE RUMOR

ELIN HILDERBRAND

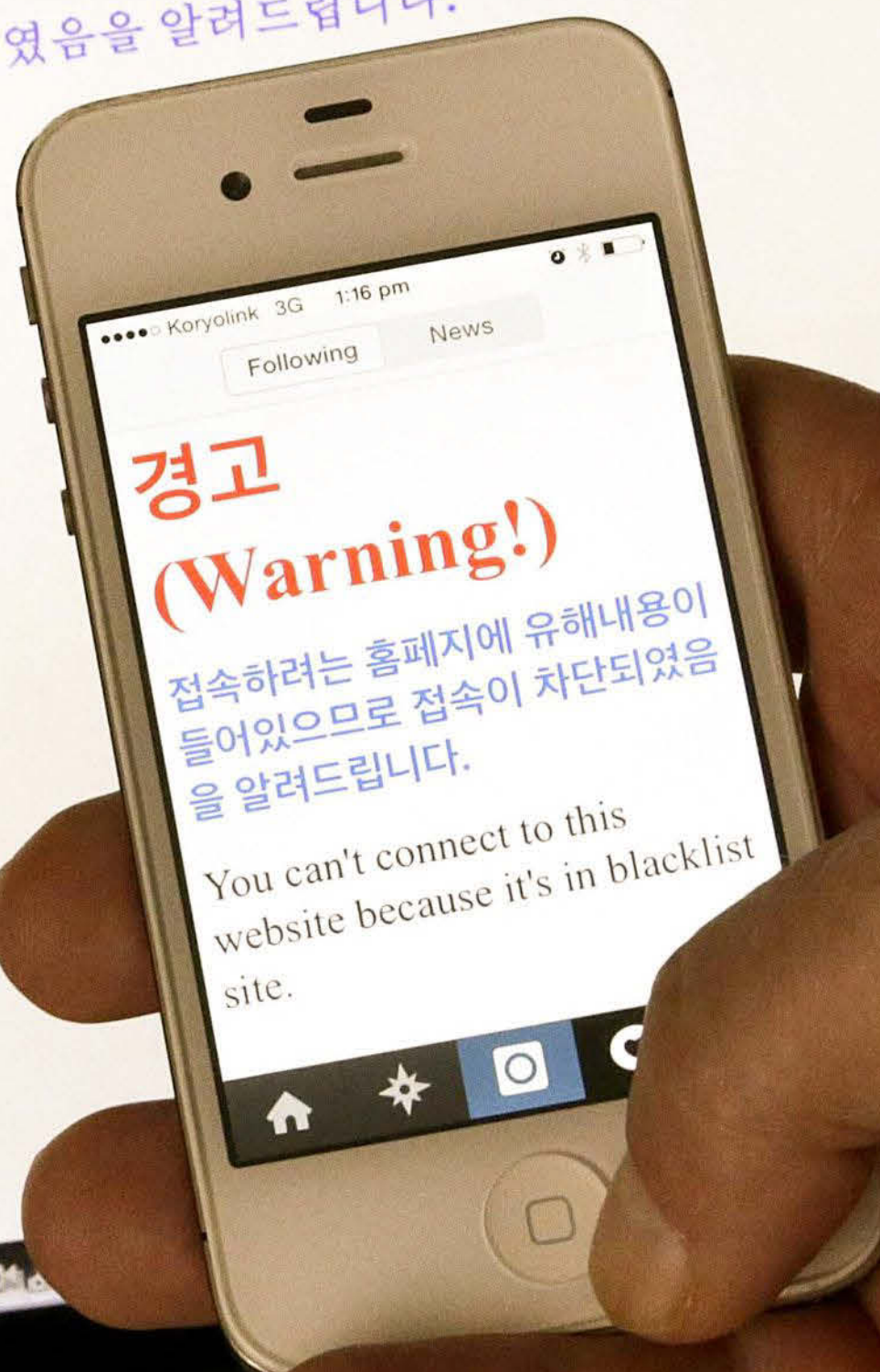
INSTAGRAM USERS IN N. KOREA WARNED SITE PUT ON BLACKLIST

Warnings are appearing on Instagram accounts in North Korea that say access to the popular photo-sharing app is being denied and that the site is blacklisted for harmful content.

Opening the app with mobile devices on the North Korean carrier Koryolink has resulted in a notification in English saying: "Warning! You can't connect to this website because it's in blacklist site." A similar notice in Korean says the site contains harmful content, though that is not mentioned in the English version.



들어있으므로 접속이 차단되었음을 알려드립니다.
cause it's in blacklist site.



Such warnings have also appeared when websites that link to Instagram are accessed through desktops or laptops using LAN cables on the North Korean Internet provider. The warnings have been appearing on and off for at least five days.

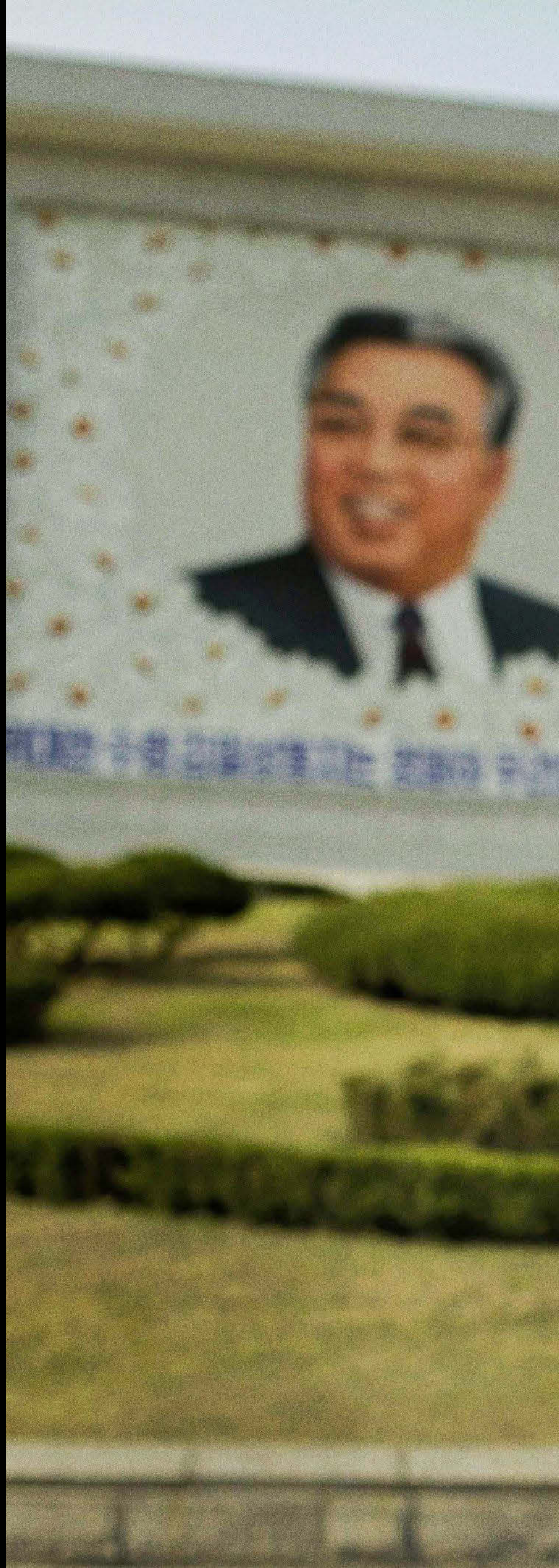
The Internet and any kind of social media remain off-limits to virtually all North Koreans, but North Korea decided in 2013 to allow foreigners in the country to use 3G on their mobile phones, which generally require a local SIM card to get onto the Koryolink mobile carrier network.

That opened the door for them to surf the Internet and post to social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. More recently, even live-streaming video had been posted using the new Twitter app Periscope.

Photos from North Korea on Instagram posted by foreigners - though regular users are very few in number - provide a rare window on daily life in North Korea. But they have also posed a quandary for North Korean officials who are highly concerned about the flow of information and images in and out of the country.

Tech support staff at Koryolink said they were not aware of any changes in policy regarding Instagram. There has been no notice from the government or from the mobile phone service to its customers that Instagram has been blacklisted. Instagram officials had no comment when contacted by The Associated Press. Instagram is owned by Facebook, which is functioning normally in Pyongyang.

It was still possible to use the app, despite the warnings, on some mobile devices. But attempts on others to post photos or view user galleries through the standard Koryolink connection have been virtually impossible, suggesting that some access was indeed being obstructed.





It was unclear where the blockage was originating, how widespread it was, whether it was a hack of some sort or if it had any connection to a fire on June 11 at a luxury hotel often used by tourists and foreign visitors in Pyongyang. Photos of the fire leaked out of the country and were carried widely by media around the world. But the fire has not yet been reported by the North's state-run media.

Besides Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites were also functioning normally. Other websites were viewable as usual even on mobile phones on which Instagram was not functioning.

It is estimated that more than 2 million North Koreans now use mobile phones, but with few exceptions they are not allowed to access the Internet, meaning the mobile service is available primarily to foreign visitors, residents and businesspeople in the country.

Andrea Lee, CEO of Uri Tours, which organizes tours to North Korea, said she was not aware of a policy shift toward blocking Instagram.

"We have been using Instagram to post photos from our (North Korea) tours since Koryolink, the local provider, announced that 3G SIM cards would be available to foreigners for purchase," she said. "While I'm unaware of this recent shift in policy toward blocking Instagram, I hope this will be a temporary policy as it's been a great tool for our company to show prospective travelers what our tours are like and to get people motivated in traveling there."

She added that the SIM cards are priced more for the long-term frequent traveler, and usually tourists who are in the country for just a few days opt not to purchase them. "But those who do possess the SIM card have near open access to the web, including social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Google and many other sites that have historically been blocked in places like China."





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